

WEDNESDAY 28 AUGUST 1996
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nst Pakistan



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my nights of hell
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THE INDEPENDENT

3,076 WEDNESDAY 28 AUGUST 1996 WEATHER: Cool and showery with some sun 40p (BR45P)

Deadly dilemma over hijackers

ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

Ministers were last night faced with the life-or-death dilemma of what to do with the Iraqi hijackers who yesterday were the subject of one of the slickest and quickest "disposal" operations of its kind at Stansted Airport.

Some Conservative MPs urged that no quarter should be given, and that the seven hijackers should be expelled - to a fate of certain torture and execution.

But as it became clear last night that the hijackers were not determined terrorists, a number of significant Whitehall sources were showing more caution; holding out hope of eventual mercy. Hints of that possible outcome, with asylum being offered once the criminal jus-

tice system had punished any hijack offences, were being left wide open.

One government source said that, given Britain's antipathy to Saddam Hussein, it was unthinkable that the men and their families should be handed over to such a tyrant and his "killing machine".

The 22-hour drama ended peacefully shortly after 1pm yesterday when the hijackers gave themselves up after being assured by police that a representative from the Iraqi Community Association was present in the control tower. Earlier, six women and two children under 10 had left the aircraft. Police said last night that the seven hijackers were being interviewed and the women were being held under immigration laws.

Reports from Khartoum,



where the hijack began on Monday afternoon, suggested that they had diplomatic status. According to accounts of conversations between the police negotiators and the cockpit of the Sudan Airways Airbus, the captain, Abdel Hamid Hidirbi, appeared anxious to reassure the British authorities that they

were not dealing with terrorists. In a report broadcast by ITV last night, he said: "They are not fundamentalists. They are not political or they do not belong to any political party or terrorist group." They are ordinary people who have been persecuted by Saddam.

Emma Nicholson, the former Conservative MP who defected to the Liberal Democrats, an acknowledged parliamentary expert on Iraqi repression, said last night: "I believe that they should be tried, in the normal court of law, for a terrorist action on British soil."

"If their story is the sort of story that I suspect it is - that

these are people who are frightened out of their wits for their lives and their families' lives - then I hope tolerance will be shown."

There was no immediate question of that last night: with widespread agreement that the hijackers, if convicted, would have to serve some kind of

prison sentence. The Aviation Security Act allows for punishment of life imprisonment for the offence of hijacking.

But it appears likely that the hijackers might serve any sentence handed down, then be freed to apply for asylum - with a possibility that they might be given exceptional leave to remain: the Home Secretary's prerogative of mercy.

Meanwhile, the men's families could also be given leave to remain in Britain, pending eventual resolution of the affair.

That prospect, however, brought an immediate pre-emptive attack from Terry Dicks, the outspoken Tory backbencher.

He said the Government should on no account consider granting the hijackers asylum, and he called for them to be re-

turned to Sudan to face trial. He warned: "If we give way on this, there will be hijackers from all over the place coming in. There can be no justification for considering claims for asylum from hijackers."

More significantly, a similarly tough stance was taken by David Howell, the former Cabinet minister who serves as chairman of the all-party Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, who said: "Hijacking is a horrendous and sometimes murderous crime and hijackers must be dealt with the utmost severity. There must be no concessions, the very hint of a concession is a guarantee that some other people down the line - some innocents - will be murdered, some hijacking will happen."

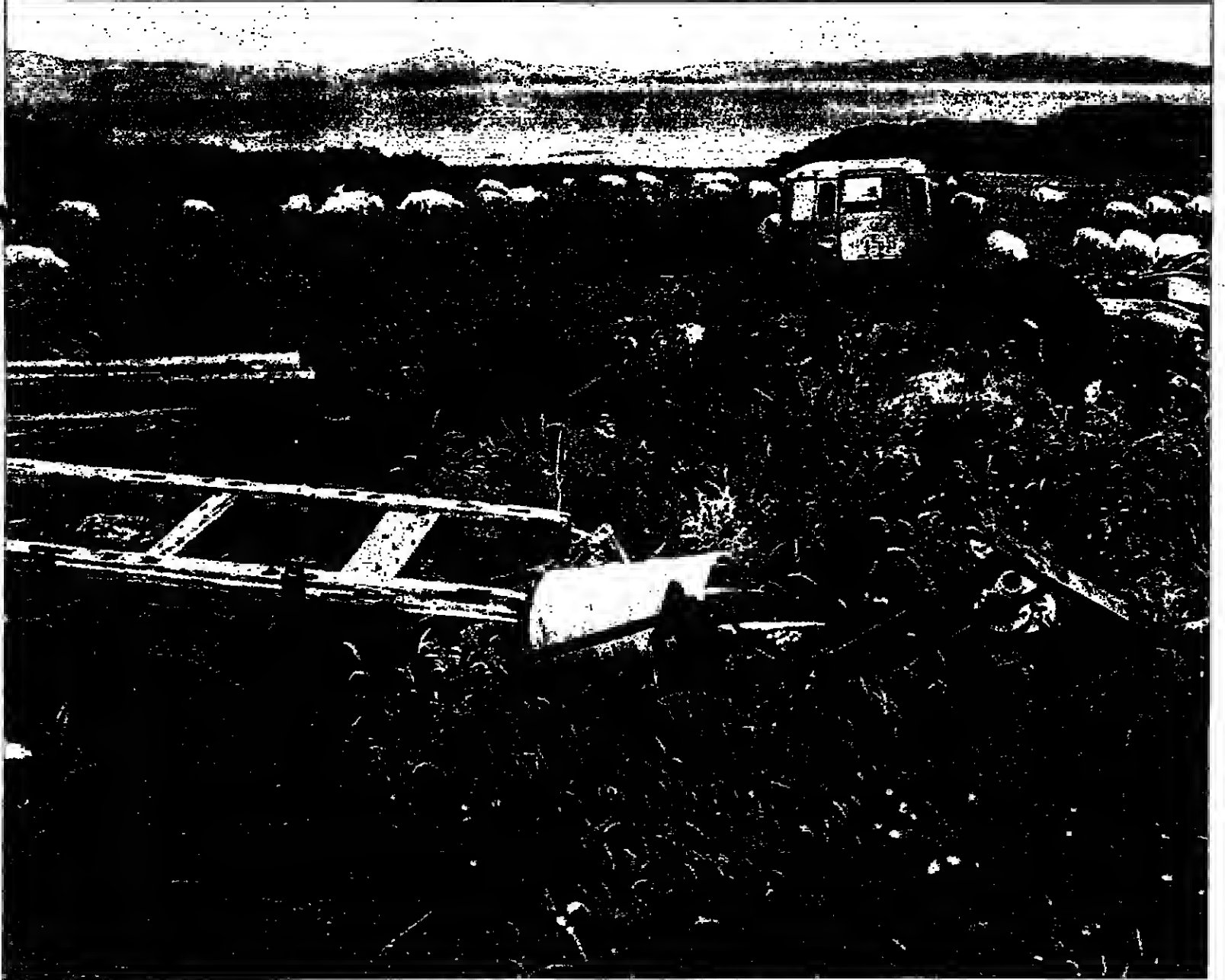
Hours of terror, page 2

TIMETABLE OF TERROR ABOARD FLIGHT 150

MONDAY
5pm: Sudan Airways Flight 150 leaves Khartoum
5.20pm: Hijackers take control of Airbus
8.15pm: Flight 150 lands at Lamaca, Cyprus
11.40pm: Aircraft leaves Lamaca for London

TUESDAY
4.30am: Airbus lands at Stansted
6.24am: First hostages released
1.07pm: Flight crew begin leaving aircraft
1.20pm: Capt Hidirbi kisses tarmac as he steps off Airbus

Islanders of Eigg launch appeal for funds to buy their heritage and end years of decline under absentee landlords



Two faces of Eigg: The rural bliss of grazing sheep, and, foreground, an unsightly dump of wrecked vehicles and machinery. Picture: ROB AUCKLAND

People too precious to be sold as baubles

There are just 63 people living on the island of Eigg; fewer than in a modest-sized block of flats in any town or city. Yet this island on the western fringe of the Inner Hebrides has become the symbol of a debate which must soon come to a head.

The issue at stake is whether individuals have the right to dominate the destinies of whole communities through private ownership of land.

In our society, uniquely in Europe, still prepared to tolerate an untrammelled free market in that most fundamental of commodities?

Eigg, the symbol, runs to just 8,000 acres.

But the same questions apply to vast tracts of Scotland which are under the control of owners whose interest is certainly not the well-being of living communities or their ability to contribute, economically or environmentally, to the wealth of the nation.

In the lottery of ownership, Eigg has fared particularly badly over the past 25 years.

Now once again, the people who live there are expected to wait and see who the new owner is.

This time, it just might be different and that is because of Eigg's status as a symbol for the wider debate.

Conservation and public bodies, along with sympathetic individuals, just might chip in enough money to make community ownership a reality.

There are several recent precedents where communities, notably Assynt in Sutherland, have managed to buck the market on their own account.

Inspiration can be found in the National Land Fund, created by Hugh Dalton in his first post-war budget.

Its purpose was to acquire land for the enjoyment of all and the benefit of the nation as "a better memorial to those who gave their lives than anything hewn from stone or bronze".

Throughout Britain, many



By Brian Wilson MP
Labour (Cunninghame North)
and publisher of the West
Island Free Press.

into the National Heritage Memorial Fund, devoted to the purchase of stately homes and their contents. Land was forgotten.

There are now signs of the wheel turning full circle. Weighed down by Lottery money, the National Heritage Memorial Fund has begun to recognise that land is also part of the national heritage.

It has recently assisted with the purchase of several estates, though so far on environmental rather than social grounds.

Now Eigg, so often the victim of a lottery, is looking for help from that source also.

One day soon, it may be recognised that people and communities are also parts of the national heritage - too precious to be bought and sold as baubles or private kingdoms.

QUICKLY

Smoking heart risk

Living with a heavy smoker more than doubles the risk of heart attacks among relatives, a new study has found. A cardiology conference in Birmingham was told yesterday that people whose spouse smoked more than 20 a day had more than two-and-a-half times the risk of those married to a non-smoker.

Page 3

School strike vote

Teachers at a Nottingham primary school have voted to take strike action when the new term begins next week unless an unruly pupil is removed from their classes. Seven of the nine staff at Manion Junior School near Worksop have voted for the action which could close the school.

Page 4

Early release shock

The head of the Prison Service, Richard Smith, admitted last night that 20 prisoners - six times as many as originally thought - had been released early from jail following the recent sentencing fiasco.

Page 4

The world takes a first step to halt abuse of its children

ADRIAN BRIDGE
Budapest

Some of the girls were so young that their parents personally delivered and fetched them from the solid three-storey house where they hoped to embark on a glittering career in modelling.

The man who received them, a 37-year-old former mechanic-turned-photographer, seemed pleasant enough, quickly winning them over with his charismatic manner and promises of international fame.

He agreed to pay the girls between £5 and £25 a session - big money by Hungarian standards. But pictures depicting his subjects fully clothed quickly developed into shots in swimsuits. From there, the descent into full-scale pornography was swift.

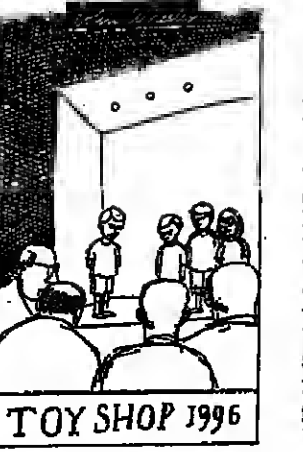
"Once the girls entered that house they were somehow spellbound and agreed to do whatever they were asked," said Istvan Nagy, who is heading the criminal investigation into the case, in the northern town of Eger. "Once they left it, they were too terrified to tell anyone, even their own parents, about what had happened."

Police believe that up to 50 girls aged between 10 and 15 may have been lured into posing nude and performing sex acts in front of the camera for a man with strong links to paedophile rings in western Europe and north America. They also suspect that, in addition to appearing in magazines and videos, the images of the victims may also have been transmitted to child porn users globally via the Internet.

"When we searched the house we found a whole library of pornographic material involving children and even animals," Mr Nagy said. "We also discovered that a special contact station had been set up on the Internet and that, in addition to western Europe and the US, there were clients from Saudi Arabia and Japan."

The growing sexual exploitation of children from eastern Europe and the transmission of child pornography via cyberspace feature prominently on the agenda of a ground-breaking international conference that opened in Stockholm yesterday.

The World Congress Against



TOY SHOP 1996

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children aims to transform universal abhorrence of paedophilia into action against it.

"To abuse children is to abuse our future," the Swedish Prime Minister, Goran Persson, said. "We must go from words to deeds by developing strategies to fight these intolerable acts."

Estimates vary, but most experts believe more than two million children worldwide fall prey to the sex industry each year. South-east Asia, in particular Thailand and the Philippines, has long been favoured by Western child-sex tourists. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, eastern Europe has also been increasingly targeted.

The conference organisers, which include the Swedish government, Unicef and Ecpat, a lobby group pressing for an end to child prostitution in Asian tourism, have proposed a tightening of laws covering child prostitution and pornography, better enforcement of those already in place and much more money for educational programmes aimed at spelling out the dangers in vulnerable communities and for rehabilitation programmes for the victims.

The British Delegation, headed by the Home Office minister Timothy Kirkhope, announced plans for legislation enabling the prosecution of Britons who commit sexual offences against children abroad.

In Australia, a 75-year-old man who has already been charged under the country's laws against child-sex tourism, was yesterday charged with 850 child-sex crimes committed in Australia.



Enquiry warns fat cats to curb sminting excesses

NICK NINELIVES
Business Correspondent

SENIOR executives have come under renewed attack today with the publication of the latest findings of the Mackinnon Report into top level sminting. After two months of intense investigations, it seems that no boardroom in the country has been spared from the all seeing eye of Sir Archibald Mackinnon.

The report's main recommendations involve a complete ban on sminting options, and a ceiling on sminting "sweeteners" - the practice whereby senior executives are offered substantial sminting opportunities to induce them to leave one firm and join another. CBI spokesperson, Albert Hain, reacted strongly to the views of industry: "Naturally, we don't want top executives to appear greedy. At the same time, we all

know how enjoyable a good smint can be. And if it's been well earned, then why should it be denied? We're currently examining the report in detail and shall be tabling counter proposals at our next Downing Street meeting in a few weeks time."

Meanwhile, Sir Archibald was remaining tight lipped: "Everything I have to say can be found in the report; the fact that I have been known to smint myself from time to time should have no bearing whatsoever on the matter."



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news

Hijack: 20 hours of terror

STEVE BOGGAN
and MATTHEW BRACE

It was more than 20 hours after his aircraft had been hijacked that Captain Abdel Hamid Hidirbi stepped out into the warmth of a sunny English afternoon, squinted and kneeled to kiss the ground.

His 186 passengers were safe, his aircraft was in one piece and, although emotionally drained, his crew of 12 had walked out unscathed. He got down to his knees and pressed his lips to the tarmac. Then he did it again.

To those watching the unfolding drama of Sudan Airways flight SUD 150, originally bound for the Jordanian capital, Amman, from Khartoum in Sudan, it was the signal to heave a collective sigh of relief. Britain's first hijack crisis in 14 years had been resolved peacefully.

The outcome could have been very different. Twenty minutes after take-off from Khartoum on Monday night, the crew were threatened by at least six Iraqi hijackers, thought to have been armed with handguns. They demanded to be flown to Cyprus, which first denied them access, then bowed to their demands when the pilot warned of a shortage of fuel.

After refuelling, they gave London's Heathrow Airport as their final destination. Although not normally the Government's policy to allow hijacked aircraft to land in Britain, permission was given—possibly by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary. The Chief Constable of Essex, John Burrow, conceded yesterday that he had spoken to Mr Howard at the beginning of the crisis and at its conclusion, although he would say only that the decision was "governmental".

"The plane was headed for Heathrow but then it had to be diverted because of fog," said Mr Burrow. "We only knew at 4am that it was definitely coming here."

Despite the pilot not having navigational charts for Stansted, he was allowed to land there. Airport authorities and police insisted last night that the decision was based solely on the weather conditions, and not on the fact that Stansted is regarded as Britain's "designated airport" with special facilities to accommodate hijack situations and regular police drills.

Security services prepared for worst

JASON BENNETTO
Crime Correspondent

Hours before Flight 150 touched down on British soil, a well-rehearsed hostage contingency plan, which involved police negotiators, the SAS, and Government ministers, had been activated.

Awaiting the kidnappers were some of the world's leading experts in anti-terrorism. Within nine hours, all aboard had been released safely and the hijackers arrested. The apparent case with which this potential crisis was dealt was the result of a well-worked strategy.

Essex police, whose force area covers Stansted, dealt with the bulk of the operation. The hostage-takers had wanted to land at Heathrow, but the flight was diverted to Stansted, 30 miles north-east of London, because it is more isolated and far easier to contain than the two major airports.

As soon as the aircraft landed it was surrounded by armed police officers at an isolated spot on the tarmac. The rest of the airport carried on as normal.

Men from the SAS Counter-Terrorist Team, who are on permanent 24-hour standby at their base near Hereford, were alerted and kept in readiness close to the airport.

But overall control was held by Essex's Chief Constable, John Burrows, who was known as "gold commander".



Journey's end: Passengers walking to freedom after the hijackers began releasing hostages from the Sudanese jet Photograph: Peter Macdarmid

For hours, radio and television bulletins had predicted that London's third airport, comprising 2,500 acres of flat Essex countryside, would be the destination. Yet many staff were given only minutes to put their well-oiled routines into action.

At 4.28am, as the Airbus 310 emerged from the mist shrouding the airport, more than 500 police, many armed, were being deployed. Runways were closed to air traffic for two hours, roads were blocked, hostage negotiators were brought in and bomb disposal units were deployed.

But, once on the ground, the hijackers displayed no signs of hostility. Chief Constable Burrow said negotiations, conducted by radio from the control tower, were opened within an hour. Never, he said, were the passengers assaulted and at no time did the hijackers threaten to blow up the plane.

On the contrary, when asked whether the hijackers—who are expected to ask for political asylum for themselves and their families—were "desperados, or frightened people seeking a new start," Mr Burrow replied: "I don't know fully yet, but the latter seems the more likely."

By 5.25am, the starboard front door of the aircraft was opened and, through the darkness, figures could be seen moving inside. At 6.15am, the hijackers allowed steps to be rolled up to the exit and, within 15 minutes, the first 10 hostages were released.

"The only demands they made were for representatives of the Red Cross and [the Office of] the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to be present, together with a Mr Sadiq Sadah, a leader of the Iraqi Community Association here in London," said Mr Burrow.

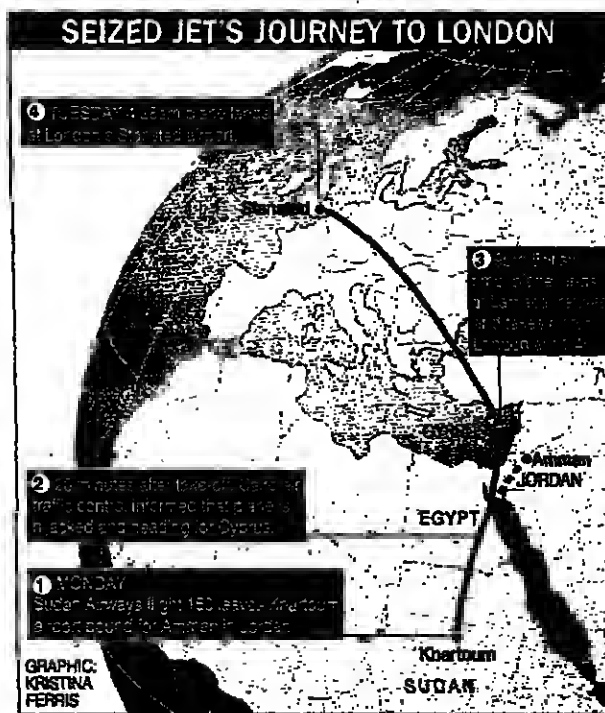
While police were despatched to find Mr Sadah,

more hostages continued to be released by mutual consent, each walking gingerly past two sets of armed police, situated less than 50 yards from the plane. By 10.25am, only 39 remained on board. Three were taken to hospital but not, according to police, with ailments caused by the hijackers.

By noon, when Mr Sadah—arrived—his suitability as a negotiator having been assessed by police—the drama was almost over.

"When we told them that Mr Sadah was in the tower, they agreed to surrender," said Mr Burrow. And once the decision was made, the end came quickly. After letting their captives go, the Iraqis sent out their families. Each, some only children, put their hands in the air or their heads. Then, came the hijackers and, after securing the aircraft, the crew.

That left only Captain Hidirbi to savour the moment before stepping out to freedom.



Sense of desperation behind Iraqis' action

Defectors weren't short of reasons to flee, writes Patrick Cockburn

If the Iraqis who hijacked the Sudanese plane to Stansted yesterday were military experts, then they had every reason to fear returning to Baghdad.

The break-up of a conspiracy within the army in late June led to mass arrests and 32 executions, according to one Iraqi opposition group.

But it is by no means clear that the hijackers had a direct political motive. After five years of sanctions, Iraq has seen a calamitous fall in the standard of living. Much of the 20-million Iraqi population would leave the country if they could. The Iraqi carrying his country's flag at the Olympic Games in Atlanta immediately took the opportunity to defect.

Majid al-Yassiri, a member of the Iraqi communist party, says the hijackers were "Iraqi military experts". This is perfectly feasible, but he did not explain how he knew this. The Egyptian news agency says the seven armed men who took over the plane passed through the VIP lounge at Khartoum airport, which would support the belief that they had official or diplomatic status in Sudan.

The fact that military or other specialists were in the Sudanese capital is not wholly surprising. Iraq cultivated good relations with Sudan in the past. Sources in Khartoum suggest that one of the men was a diplomat.

The hijacking underlines the desperate desire of many Iraqis to find refuge elsewhere in the world. This is not easy. When Colonel Muammar Gaddafi, the Libyan leader, expelled Palestinian teachers last year, he sent a team to Iraq to recruit replacements. The Libyan embassy in the Mansur suburb of Baghdad was besieged by highly qualified Iraqis clutching their CVs as they desperately applied for jobs. Of the developed countries, only New Zealand has been willing to take Iraqi emigrants, and only those who speak and write English.

It is easy for an Iraqi to cross into Jordan, but to go further is almost impossible. Such is the political and economic desperation of Iraqis that some 40 have even crossed the Jordan river into Israel to claim political asylum.

Within the next few weeks, Iraq will begin to export limit-

ed quantities of oil under close UN supervision for the first time since 1990. This may alleviate the sense of desperation in Baghdad but many members of the Iraqi professional middle-class feel that their only resort is to escape. Highly qualified professors at Baghdad University find their monthly salary is now worth only £3 in real terms. For much of the officer corps in the armed forces the situation is even worse. Scarce resources are channelled to the elite Special Forces which act as a praetorian guard around Saddam. The Republican Guard divisions also receive special treatment. Draftees in the regular army barely receive enough to eat. The officer corps has been systematically depleted by six purges since 1991.

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SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

BT advertisement featuring Bob Hoskins misled the public, the Independent Television Commission has ruled. It criticised BT's recent Friends and Family advertisement because many viewers believed they could get an immediate 10 per cent discount on their bills.

In fact, discounts did not start until the period after the next bill. Phone-users had to wait up to three months for the savings to take effect and could even wait almost six months to see the effects of the discount in their next bill. Many thought their bill would be cut as soon as they registered their most popular five numbers, said the TTC.

The first of a new class of Aids drugs which can significantly improve patients' chances of survival was launched in Britain yesterday after winning EU-wide approval. Ritonavir, a so-called protease inhibitor, attacks Aids in a different way to existing drugs. It stops the virus's attempts to spread in the final stages of its life cycle: existing drugs work in the early stages.

Trials show that when the virus comes under double attack from both protease inhibitors and previously available treatments like AZT, the amount of virus circulating in patients' bodies is reduced to undetectable levels. Patients' immune systems are also boosted. The chances of the disease progressing—and the risk of death—are therefore significantly reduced.

New guidelines over changes to royal titles after divorce are to be issued on the authority of the Queen. But Buckingham Palace denied any snub to the Princess of Wales was intended by the timing of the announcement, in the official London Gazette, for the week of her divorce.

The announcement, expected to appear later in the week, is the result of full consideration of the issues raised by the two royal divorces this year, a spokeswoman said. The "letters patent" entry would announce formal guidelines on general principles about the dropping of the style "Her Royal Highness" in the event of divorce, the spokeswoman said. Both the Duchess and Diana have lost the right to be called "HRH" under the terms of their divorce settlements.

A man facing child pornography charges in connection with the distribution of material on the Internet has been found dead in a fume-filled car, police said yesterday. Computer technician Robert Bickerstaffe, 48, was found near a Lake District beauty-spot after being charged with possessing indecent photographs of children.

Bickerstaffe, of Berwick Avenue, Ainsdale, Merseyside, was on police bail after being arrested and charged last Thursday following a long running police surveillance operation at Liverpool University computer centre. The father of three, a senior technician at the centre, was found dead in a lay-by at Watermillock, near Glenridding, beside Lake Ullswater.

Investigators have begun examining a passenger ferry after a fire broke out shortly after it had left St Peter Port harbour, Guernsey, on Monday evening. More than 100 passengers were transferred at sea to other ships. The blaze took hold in the engine room of the French-owned catamaran. Four nearby ships, including two similar passenger ferries, rushed to the stricken Trident Seven, owned by the Emerald Line, after the alarm was raised.

All 111 passengers were safely transferred to other vessels while six crew and eight emergency fire-fighters tackled the blaze. Guernsey police said the passengers, mainly British and French day-trippers, were ashore within an hour. An 88-year-old French woman was taken to the town's Princess Elizabeth Hospital with leg injuries.

Claims that CS spray was used by police officers to separate a mother from her baby and on two teenagers in a children's home are being investigated. The first incident is alleged to have happened in Middlesbrough when police officers accompanied a social worker who was taking the 10-month-old baby into care. It is claimed that the CS spray was used on the mother, who allegedly still had the baby in her arms and was resisting attempts to take the infant from her.

The second incident is alleged to have happened last Monday when police were called to a children's home in Middlesbrough where a 14-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl were believed to have either harmed themselves or were threatening to harm themselves and had barricaded themselves into a room.

Surgeons who provided video footage of patients' operations to a commercial company could face disciplinary action if they did so without their patients' specific permission, Gerald Malone, the Minister for Health, indicated yesterday. His warning came as the General Medical Council, the doctors' disciplinary body, warned that patient consent was "the central issue in this case" and as the Department of Health's injunction against the compilers of the £12.99 *Everday Operations* video was due to be heard in the High Court today. Nicholas Timmins

Strikes by guards and catering crews, which yesterday caused the cancellation of around a half the services at seven train operators, are set to spread to a further nine companies. Time-tables affected yesterday were those run by ScotRail; Regional Railways North East; North West; Regional Railways; CrossCountry Trains; North London Railways; South Wales and West Trains and Merseyrail. Electricians' strike ballots are to begin this week at Anglia Railways; Cardiff Railways; Gatwick Express; Great Eastern Railways; Inter-City West Coast; London Tilbury and Southend Rail; Midland Main Line; South West Trains and Thames Trains. The result is due in mid-September. Barrie Clement

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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Rising star: Valery Gergiev - critically acclaimed, but not yet widely appreciated - who is bringing the Rotterdam Philharmonic to the Proms next week Photograph: Laurie Lewis

This man is the hottest conductor in the world. The critics love him. So why aren't Prom-goers snapping up seats to see him?

DAVID LISTER

Tonight the Berlin Philharmonic plays at the Proms. The performance has been sold out for months. Next week the hottest young conductor in the world, the charismatic Valery Gergiev, brings the Rotterdam Philharmonic to the Proms. It has attracted a larger number of critics than any other concert, but tickets are still available.

The public still associates the orchestras of Berlin, New York and Chicago (all of which sold out instantly) with the Olympian heights of classical music. The city of Rotterdam does not cause the spine to tingle in the same way.

Classical music concert-goers, it seems, are as susceptible to

the lure of a "brand name" as their counterparts at rock concerts who blithely ignore key personnel changes among the musicians.

Certainly, the aforementioned orchestras are still among the best in the world, but the world of classical music has changed since Von Karajan in Berlin, Solti in Chicago and Bonlez in New York ruled relatively unchallenged. As CD buyers know, the less glamorous names on the less glamorous labels at budget prices can produce music which achieves critical acclaim. And the great orchestras can have their off days.

The music critic Norman Lebrecht - whose new book *When The Music Stops* claims that the

big orchestral names "are often overpaid and overplayed" - said yesterday that audiences take a gamble when they buy tickets for the big names.

"There is a premier league of orchestras who, when they play on top form, are unbeatable. But when they play on less than top form they can pull a real stinker. They may have been touring too much or they don't care because money has become more important than institutional pride."

"None of the London orchestras can play as brilliantly as the Berlin Philharmonic on top form; but equally none of the London orchestras can play as badly as the Berlin Philharmonic can do if they don't like the conductor or the coffee

wasn't quite right at breakfast."

There is also, says Lebrecht, the problem of too much playing. "You always have to ask whether the orchestra is coming in as a first step on the tour or the third or fourth step. Are we getting wide-awake performances? The New York Philharmonic came in fourth step on their tour. So all these things have to be taken into account. It is a gamble for audiences, though less of a gamble at the Proms when the exuberance and the foot stamping tends to rouse even the biggest orchestras and give them back their old enthusiasm."

But for Lebrecht and other experts there is as much excitement in names that are unknown to the public at large. "The Chamber Orchestra of Europe is one of the most interesting bands around," he said. "Conductors who have worked with them tell me it is a total experience. You're playing with some of the best young musicians in Europe."

At this year's Proms, the premier league names all sold out; but there have been some new British entrants into the top division. Britain's Sir Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra

are also among the hottest tickets. There were sell-outs too for soloist horn player Barry Tuckwell's farewell performance and for conductor Trevor Pinnock with the English Concert Orchestra.

Tickets were also at a premium for the National Youth Orchestra. Are they now a major force among world orchestras? "Possibly," said a Proms official, "but you also have to remember there are a lot of parents and friends."

Critically acclaimed orchestras battle with the greats for their share of the glory



Claudio Abbado rehearses with the Berlin Philharmonic. "With them, I feel as though I am riding a thoroughbred"

PREMIER LEAGUE

BERLIN PHILHARMONIC

Probably the only symphony orchestra ever to have become a household name (its past conductors include Mahler, Brahms and Grieg). Seven years after the death of its legendary conductor Herbert von Karajan the orchestra and its current maestro Claudio Abbado remain in demand all over the world. Player for player it is probably even better now than in Karajan's day. Abbado says: "With them, I feel like I'm riding a thoroughbred. I try to convey the feeling of complete liberty and indicate with a few small gestures the direction we should take." The city of Berlin continues to fund it lavishly. Indeed it is Berlin rather than the BBC which will be paying for tonight's visit by the orchestra.

CHICAGO SYMPHONY

Making its first visit to the Proms for seven years and bringing both its principal conductor Daniel Barenboim and its conductor laureate Sir Georg Solti, Barenboim says of his charges: "I am continually refreshed by their eagerness to re-examine music they have played many times and with enviable success. The orchestra never rests on its past achievements, even though it is the toast of audiences throughout the world."

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

The oldest orchestra in the United States, former music directors include Mahler, Toscanini and Bernstein. Under present maestro Kurt Masur it was named Orchestra of the Year at the 1995 classical music awards. Unlike most of its premier league counterparts it also specialises in outreach

OSLO PHILHARMONIC

Sold out its Proms concert, but largely because of its conductor Mariss Jansons. Ironically, Jansons has had a heart attack and will not appear. By itself the Oslo Philharmonic does not have the reputation of Berlin, Vienna, New York and Chicago, though Lebrecht describes its sound as "absolutely distinctive".

CHALLENGING FOR PROMOTION

ROTTERDAM PHILHARMONIC

Valery Gergiev, who is also conductor with the Kirov, is the hottest name around; but it is a name that stubbornly remains considerably hotter than the Rotterdam orchestra here. Indeed this autumn's festival by the orchestra is, significantly, entitled "The Rotterdam Philharmonic Gergiev Festival". Gergiev praises the orchestra's "very light sunny sound and strong character, but audiences simply will not acknowledge it as a global name."

NICOLAUS ESTERHAZY SINFONIA

Not a name to tip lightly off the tongue, nor one likely to have them queuing round the block for tickets. But this Hungarian orchestra, conducted by flautist Bela Drahos, has drawn some rave reviews for its budget Beethoven on Moxie. The *Daily Telegraph* described the orchestra's recording as "not only a bargain but also a magnificent record by any standards".

Health risks of a smoker in the home

GLENDA COOPER

Living with a heavy smoker more than doubles your risk of heart attacks, a new study has found. The more your relatives smoke the greater the danger you face. And for people who already have known risk factors - such as diabetes, high blood pressure or a family history of coronary heart disease - the hazards are even greater.

Researchers from Argentina presented their data at the European Society of Cardiology Congress in Birmingham yesterday.

They had looked at 2,000 people who said that they had never smoked and after collecting data on the smoking habits of their spouses and children assessed the relative risks of having a heart attack.

Those who lived with a spouse smoking more than 20 cigarettes a day had nearly two and a half times the risk of those who were married to a non-smoker. People who lived with a lighter smoker or had children who smoked still saw their risk go up by 50 per cent. When high-risk factors, such as high blood pressure, were present passive smoking intensified the danger.

"Passive smoking at home appears to be associated with the risk of acute myocardial infarction [heart attack] and there is a significant increase in relative risk with the amount exposed daily," the researchers said.

Passive smoking has been a contentious issue. In 1992 the United States Environmental Protection Agency decided environmental tobacco smoke was a class A carcinogen, estimating that it caused 3,000 deaths a year.

Many public areas such as restaurants, aircraft and railways have banned smoking. High-profile cases such as that of the entertainer Roy Castle whose

fatal lung cancer was said to have been caused by passive smoking and Veronica Bland who won £15,000 compensation after claiming she had contracted chronic bronchitis at work, have encouraged bans.

However, last May the European Working Group on Environmental Tobacco Smoke analysed 48 studies and concluded that passive smoking did not cause cancer.

A spokeswoman for the anti-smoking pressure group ASH said: "There's been a lot of research which shows that people whose spouses smoke are at an increased risk of health damage. We do not want to dictate to people about what goes on in their homes but it shows the urgent need for legislation on smoking in public places."

But Martin Ball, of Forest, which supports the right to smoke, said: "The claims of exposure to environmental tobacco smoke have been demolished over the years, shown to be bogus and based on rotten science."

Football players have the highest risk of sudden death while playing sport, and even table tennis and skittles can pose a threat according to new research. But doctors at the European Society of Cardiology Congress insisted yesterday that the benefits of keeping fit far outweighed the risk.

Nearly four out of five sudden deaths in sport are due to cardiovascular disease, and in the over-35s the majority are due to coronary heart disease. In Britain around one in 50,000 active athletes die every year.

Doctors looked at the sudden deaths of more than 2,000 people in German sports clubs from 1981-1994. Football was most dangerous, claiming 628 lives. Tennis claimed 151, cycling 124 - just ahead of gymnastics, table tennis 86, skittles 73, horse riding 55 and canoeing 45.

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news

Mix-up gravely mishandled, prison chief says

JASON BENNETT
Crime Correspondent

The head of the Prison Service admitted last night that 537 prisoners – six times as many as originally thought – had been released early from jail following the recent sentencing fiasco.

The disclosure by Richard Tilt, the director general of the service, will cause even more embarrassment to Michael

Howard, the Home Secretary, who is fighting to regain ground in an incident that has become a severe political liability.

The Home Office has already indicated that it will not try to rearrest the former inmates, including sex and violent offenders, released early last week.

Mr Tilt, who broke off his holiday in Italy at the weekend to return to Britain to take charge

of the crisis, said last night that the situation had been "gravely mishandled" and that he had offered Mr Howard, his "sincere personal apology" for the failings. He said ministers had not been told about the work the Prison Service had been doing which led to the issuing of new guidelines on sentencing, until a submission he made last week, some days after the releases had started.

Mr Howard said he took a "very serious view" of what had happened. However, he did not regard it as a matter for resignation. The announcement followed a meeting between Mr Howard, Mr Tilt and his deputy, Alan Walker, yesterday afternoon.

Mr Howard told Mr Tilt and Mr Walker that he wanted more information about their decision to release thousands of inmates

early without properly informing the Home Office.

He was said to be "unhappy" at the report on the affair, prepared by Mr Walker, and wanted additional material by this morning.

But despite anger among ministers at the way the affair threatened to undermine the Government's tough stance on law and order, Mr Tilt is expected to keep his job. He held

a joint press conference last night with Mr Howard to announce the progress of the investigation into the latest prison blunder.

Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, called on Mr Howard to publish Mr Tilt's report on the affair.

In a letter to the Home Secretary he said: "In view of the great public concern about this extraordinary situation –

not least the victims – and the widespread disbelief that ministers could have known nothing about this, I am writing to ask you to publish Mr Tilt's report as soon as possible."

It appears that Mr Howard had little option other than to stick with Mr Tilt as it would have been embarrassing to lose a second director general so soon after the dismissal of his predecessor, Derek Lewis earlier this year. It could also prove difficult to find a replacement for Mr Tilt if he was forced out of his £90,000-a-year job.

Mr Howard is still waiting for someone to challenge legally his decision on Friday to halt the immediate release of about 500 prisoners and the reduction in the sentence of up to 4,000 people who have committed several crimes.

Living in sin is not evil, say churchgoers

ANDREW BROWN
Religious Affairs Correspondent

Ordinary members of the Church of England see nothing wrong in cohabitation outside marriage, according to a poll published yesterday.

The survey, commissioned by the Protestant Reformation Society, a fringe group of conservative evangelicals, shows the church moving slowly but steadily towards a more liberal line on sexual matters, and as overwhelmingly supportive of women priests and bishops.

Seventy per cent of all members of the Church of England surveyed, and 56 per cent of active members, said it was not "sinful in the eyes of God for a man and a woman to live together without being married". More than a third of the active clergy agreed with that statement, and more than a quarter of the retired clergy.

Those figures suggest that *Something to Celebrate*, the Church report last year strongly criticised by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, for suggesting that "living in sin" was not a serious matter, was in fact reflecting the views of the overwhelming majority of lay people. Among those aged 25-35, the people most likely to be in that domestic arrangement, the proportion disapproving fell to 12 per cent.

The Gallup poll also seems

to suggest that cohabitation is the favoured solution for the Prince of Wales's marital difficulties, should he become King. Asked if they thought "the heir to the Throne should become monarch and Supreme Governor of the Church of England if divorced", 32 per cent of regular attenders said he should, and 40 per cent of all those describing themselves as Anglican, a slightly higher proportion than the population as a whole. Only the active clergy, of all the categories surveyed, had a majority for the Prince taking up both positions, though divorced, of 45 per cent to 40 per cent.

On the question of whether the church could or should accept a remarried Supreme Governor, there was much stronger resistance among both full-time and retired clergy.

However there was no difference among the public as a whole in the proportions disapproving of Prince Charles as monarch and Supreme Governor whether he is just divorced or remarried as well. In both cases, the figures were 43 per cent opposed, 37 per cent in favour.

Eighty per cent of regular attenders believe that the church should remain established, as do 55 per cent of the full-time clergy and 63 per cent of the population as a whole.

Seventy per cent of full-time clergy think the church should ordain women as priests.

Frogman to the fore as golfers get that sinking feeling



Hazardous task: Frogman Derek Palmer retrieving balls from the lake on the 18th hole during yesterday's pro-am tournament at Collingtree Park Golf Club, ahead of the One 2 One British Masters which begins today at the Northampton course and climaxes on Saturday. Photograph: Keith Dobney

The school says he's violent. His mother says otherwise. Now his teachers are to strike

FRAN ABRAMS
Education Correspondent

A primary school is threatened with closure after a vote by teachers to take strike action unless an unruly pupil is removed from classes.

Seven of the nine staff at Manton Junior School, Work-sop, Nottinghamshire, have voted for strike action.

They are all members of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, which has repeatedly held such protests over disruptive pupils.

The Manton teachers allege that 10-year-old Matthew Wilson attacked both staff and pupils at the school.

They say that he should not be allowed to return. But

Matthew's mother, Pamela Cliffe, has denied that he has caused trouble.

The union says Matthew has previously been temporarily excluded for threatening and violent behaviour.

Nigel de Gruchy, the union's general secretary, said his members at the school had voted unanimously for a strike and, if no agreement was made, would take all-out action from next Tuesday when the new term begins.

Governors at the school had twice refused to permanently exclude the boy, ignoring the recommendation of the head and deputy head.

"I believe the governors have acted perversely," said Mr de Gruchy.

"The staff have voted 100 per

cent in favour of strike action in order to protect themselves and indeed the other children from this violent youngster."

Matthew would have to be educated separately from other children, he added. This would be expensive but was the only option.

Mr de Gruchy has appealed to Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, to intervene.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, ACAS, has also tried to make contact with the school's governors during the summer holidays in an attempt to resolve the problem, but have received no response.

Councillor Fred Riddell, chairman of Nottinghamshire's education committee, said he would deal with the matter

when its offices re-opened after the bank holiday today. "I don't know what's going to happen," he said.

"We shall be wanting to hear from the teacher representatives about it."

Meanwhile teachers at a school in Halifax, West Yorkshire, have also voted to strike if they are asked to teach a 13-year-old girl who was expelled last term after allegedly scuffling with a teacher and another pupil.

However, NASUWT deputy general secretary Eamonn O'Kane said action was not now expected.

He said: "I believe the girl will be taught by the headteacher, and if that's the case, while it's not an ideal situation, it will avoid strike action."

Exam boards face streamlining to calm fears of 'grade inflation'

FRAN ABRAMS

Ministers are preparing to do battle over plans to reduce the number of examination boards to ensure that standards are the same across the country. Board officials have suggested that they might take legal action to protect their interests.

Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, announced yesterday that she was planning to take action amid concern over "grade inflation" which has caused a rapid rise in pass rates at GCSE and A-levels.

She said that she was considering a range of options for the streamlining of the system, though she expected to stop short of creating a single, national examinations board.

"It is a question of keeping a handle on the standards. If by reducing the number you can more closely control standards

it is worth looking at very seriously," she said.

Sir Ron Dearing, chairman of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, has recommended that Mrs Shephard should consider merging some of the six boards. The existence of so many examinations bodies raises questions about the comparability of standards across the country, he believes.

However, the boards are deeply unhappy about the prospect of reform.

Dennis Hatfield, chairman of the Joint GCSE, an umbrella body for the boards, said that their numbers had already been reduced when the GCSE was introduced in 1988.

The boards were independent businesses and it was not clear whether Mrs Shephard had the legal powers to close or merge them. The issue might even have to be tested in the courts, Mr Hatfield said.

"It would depend entirely on what she actually proposed, but I don't think they would be happy. If a big board was being shut out of existence it might consider it necessary to fight," he said.

Kathleen Tattersall, chief executive of the Northern Examinations and Assessment Board, said the move would do nothing to guarantee standards.

"It is not the case that exam boards trade and compete on standards. We grade on what candidates actually do in exams. This is not a standards issue," she said.

Several of the GCSE and A-level boards have already held talks with the bodies that control vocational courses with a view to building closer links. One, the University of London Examinations and Assessment Council, has already merged with the Business and Technology Education Council.

However, there is even deeper concern about standards in some of the Government's new vocational qualifications than in GCSE and A-level. Figures published yesterday showed that only four out of two students taking "applied A-levels" or GNVQs had completed their courses within two years.

Officials at the Department for Education and Employment argued that not all students intended to complete the courses they started, and that some dropped out for "positive" reasons because they had found jobs.

But Alan Smithers, professor of public policy at Brunel University, said that more information was needed to assess the exams properly.

"It is very important to develop applied education, but it looks as if any success with GNVQ is very patchy indeed," he said.

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news

Airships' comeback is more than hot air

New generation of Zeppelins are not just pie in the sky, insist their champions

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

The airship is making one of its regular comebacks but this time, supporters say, it is here to stay. The Zeppelin company, based in Friedrichshafen, in Germany, is making a prototype of a new generation of airships which it hopes to have in full production by the end of 1998.

The new craft, the size of a Boeing 747, will be able to travel at 140kph and stay in the air for up to three and a half days. It will be used for tourist trips and possibly for surveillance operations, where its ability to stay in the air for long periods is unparalleled.

The Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik company, a direct descendant of the original firm that made the Zeppelin (which played an important role in the First World War) and which also manufactured the ill-fated *Hindenburg*, is owned by the local council and has 35 people working on the project.

Mathias Mandel, the development manager, said that the new airship would be a completely new design concept. "It could be used for a variety of scientific purposes, as well as tourist flights. Because it can fly for long periods, it can be the platform for many experiments."

The Zeppelin managers are optimistic and say that they expect to sign "six provisional agreements world-wide within the next eight months".

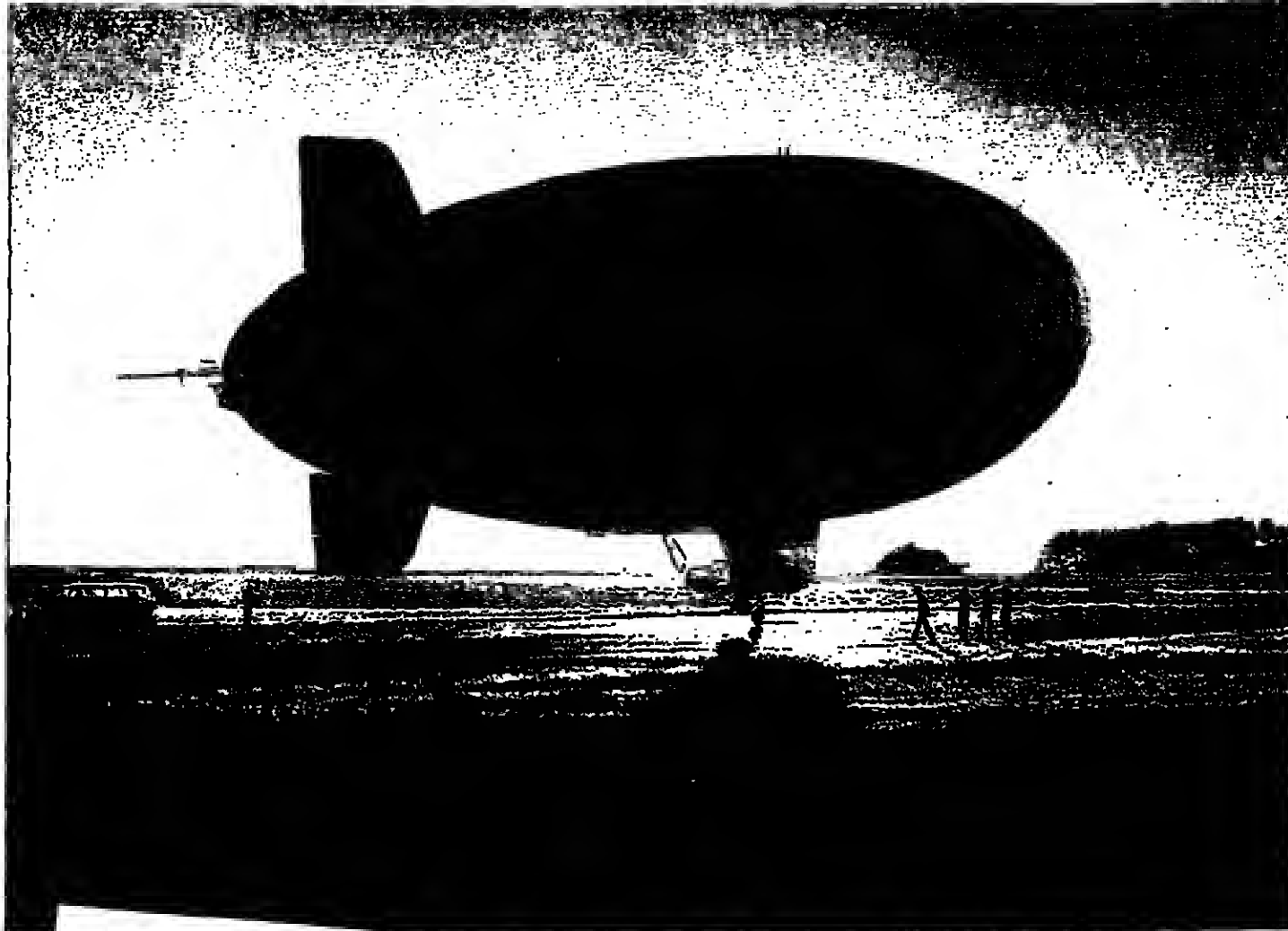
They hope that the airships will become popular as a form of air travel which is much more environmentally friendly than aircraft.

However, it has no firm orders and although Condor, a subsidiary of Lufthansa, has its logo on mock-ups of the prototype, the company says it has no plans to buy any of the airships, which will only be able to seat a dozen people and will cost about £5m.

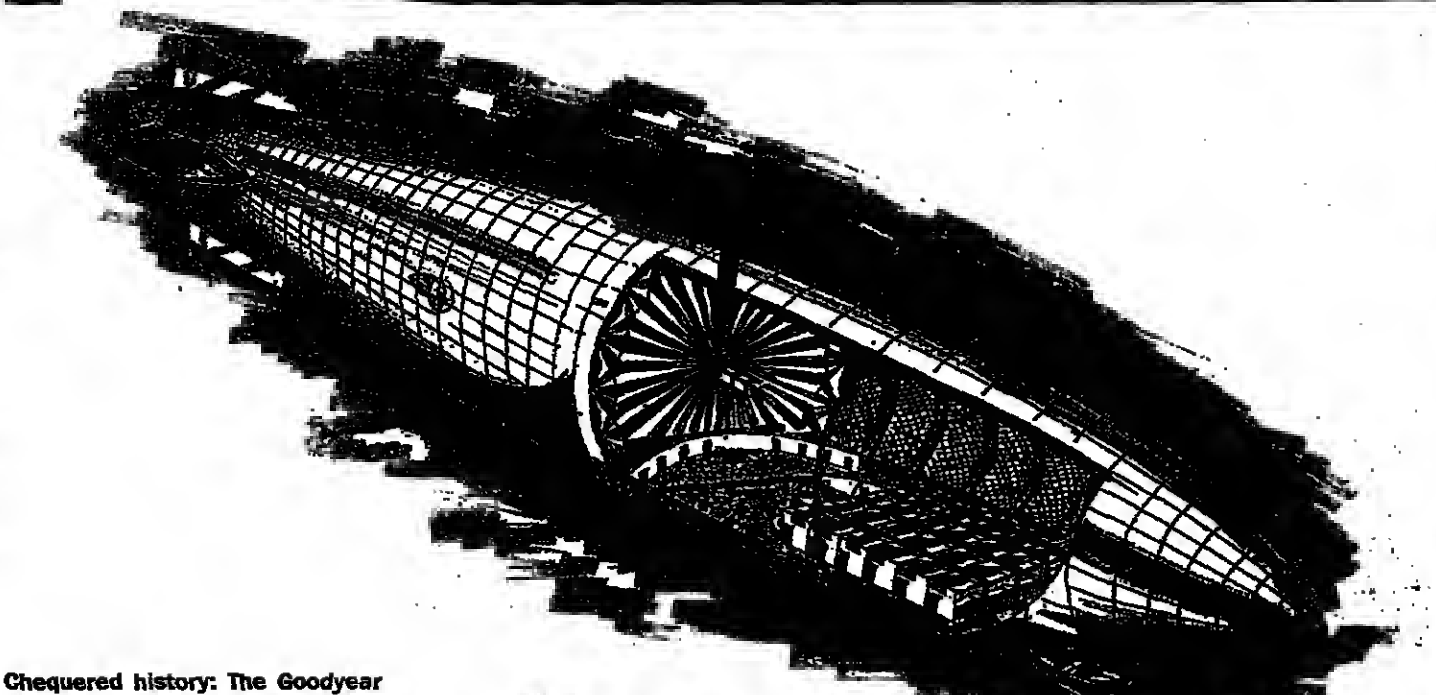
Despite the company's hopes, there remain doubts about whether airships have a future. Conventional wisdom has it that the *Hindenburg* disaster, in May 1937 in New Jersey, in which at least 33 people were killed, was the reason why airships have never since been developed commercially.

There have been a number of attempts since the Second World War to revive the concept, including Airship Industries, with an airship at RAF Cardington, in Bedfordshire, but all have foundered because of the high development costs and the lack of a market.

Westinghouse, which took over the company, built a half-scale model of a big airship, but



Chequered history: The Goodyear Europa (top left), a modern blimp used for advertising, little more than a balloon with an engine. Photograph: Aviation Picture Library. The *Hindenburg* exploding (right) as it came in to dock in New Jersey in May 1937, killing at least 33 people and dealing what many considered an almost fatal blow to airship development, although the introduction of large four-engine planes was also a factor. Photograph: Hulton Getty. The Holland Millennium Navigator (above), possibly the way ahead for airships. Photograph: Rigid Airship Designs.



it was destroyed last year in a fire and the remnants of the company have been taken over by a British team based in Bedford and which hopes to develop a series of new airships.

Airship experts suggest it was not the *Hindenburg* which caused the demise of the airship but the impracticality of the

craft and the development of large four-engine aircraft during the Second World War. The only airships in use now are blimps, which, unlike original airships, do not have a rigid structure but are effectively a balloon with an engine. As Robin Mackay, who runs the Fairoaks airport, in Surrey,

where the Fuji blimp, seen over Wimbledon and Wembley during sporting occasions, is often docked overnight, said: "It gives you a wonderful view and is great for tourists who want to go up in the air for an hour or for use as a TV platform but what else can they do?"

Blimps are fairly primitive,

with only basic lavatory facilities, for example. They are difficult to moor, as they need a mast and a rope has to be caught by men on the ground and attached to the mast.

When the Fuji blimp comes over from its base in Germany, a lorry with 20 men and a portable mast has to follow it

through the countryside in case it should get into difficulties.

The *Hindenburg* required more than 200 men to tie it down but the Zeppelin company claims that only three will be needed with the new craft.

Mike Rentell, secretary of the Airship Association, reckons there is a strong niche market

for airships: "There tends to be a revival in interest in airships when there is a rise in the economy," he said optimistically. But he is realistic about their potential: "They will not replace conventional aircraft, but they have a number of unique attributes which make them very useful." He said that

a Dutch company had launched a project called the Holland Millennium Navigator at the University of Delft which plans to build a rigid airship 540 feet long by 1999 at a cost of £25m. "What would be a better way of celebrating the millennium than a ride over the Pyramids in that?" Mr Rentell said.

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National emergency beds pledge

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

A national emergency bed system to help doctors find intensive-care vacancies anywhere in England will be fully in place by 1 December, the Health minister Gerald Malone announced yesterday.

The system will create "a one-stop shop" to allow doctors through one phone call to find the nearest intensive-care bed when their own hospital is full or their unit does not provide the appropriate care.

The service will extend nationally a bed register covering 100 units in the South-east which was set up in 1995 after Malcolm Murray, 45, died of serious head injuries he received in a road accident in Orpington, south London.

The system will create "a one-stop shop" to allow doctors through one phone call to find the nearest intensive-care bed when their own hospital is full or their unit does not provide the appropriate care.

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don. The junior doctor on duty at Queen Mary Hospital, Sidcup, where Mr Murray was taken, was unable to find an intensive-care bed anywhere in the London area, despite many phone calls, and the patient eventually died after being flown 200 miles by air-rescue helicopter to Leeds General Infirmary.

"Clinicians will no longer have to waste valuable time in telephoning other units to find a suitable bed," Mr Malone said yesterday. Now they will be able to go to a central database which will keep track of vacant beds in the 234 hospitals which have them three times a day for an update on availability. The system will cover all 2,600 adult and children's intensive-care beds in England - although Scotland and Wales

have yet to decide whether to join in.

Where the nearest bed may be over a national border - in the case of Bristol and Cardiff, for example, or Carlisle and the Scottish hospitals, good local links already existed, Mr Malone argued. The Scots and Welsh were free to join the system later, he said.

The move follows a series of scandals, of which Mr Murray's case was merely the most extreme, where doctors have faced serious difficulties in locating vacant beds. "This will save time, prevent needless delay, help doctors make the best decisions for patients, and improve care," Mr Malone said.

"It is sometimes essential to move patients, but these transfers need to be kept to a minimum. They must be swift, safe and sensitive."

With each intensive-care bed costing £750,000 a year to run, they were an expensive resource which would always be limited, he said. "We must make sure we make the very best use of them." The system would be fully up and running before the winter months, when demand on beds and intensive care facilities usually peaks.

The move was welcomed by the Royal College of Physicians which said that as well as saving "precious time" it would also provide a clear picture of the demand for intensive care, "something we have called for in the past".

Mr Malone said that he was always reluctant to say there were no problems in the National Health Service, but since the system in the South-east had been introduced, providing services to neurosciences and paediatric cover, there had been no recurrence of the problem Mr Murray's case revealed.

The system will link the London-based service with a register already running in the North-west while bringing in the rest of the country at total set-up cost of £200,000 and an annual running cost of £100,000 a year - a sum described as "excellent value" by Mr Malone, given the cost of each bed. The NHS Executive will fund it for the first 18 months after which health authorities, which will be required to take part in the new system, will have to meet the running costs.

Exchequer tap runs dry for the pro-Europeans

ANTHONY BEVINS
Political Editor

Tory Euro-sceptics have been assured by Ministers that there will be no further Government cash for the pro-EU European Movement, the all-party campaign for closer European integration.

Foreign Office Minister Jeremy Hanley has written to Neil Hamilton, the strongly Thatcherite former Minister, to say: "There are no plans to offer financial assistance in future years."

Richard Shepherd, a Conservative MP who had the party whip withdrawn following a 1994 Commons revolt on Europe, told the *Independent* yesterday: "That must be

appropriate. There has to be equal funding between the two propositions; for and against."

Between 1969 and 1975, Government gave the movement annual grants of around £20,000.

That was stopped by Labour in 1975, but the payments resumed under Margaret Thatcher in 1981 - to the tune of £30,000 a year.

It was then decided in 1985 that the annual funding should be phased out, although a "one-off" grant of £20,000 was paid to the movement in 1987, to fund a series of regional conferences on the Maastricht treaty.

A further "one-off" grant of £10,000 was made in January, 1994 - "to help attract

corporate sponsorship". However, it is unlikely that the European Movement will be embarrassed by the Foreign Office decision to turn off the Exchequer tap.

A spokesman said yesterday that it had an annual income of about £400,000, mainly from private business and individual sponsors including David Sainsbury, of Sainsbury store fame. This contrasts with the more cash-strapped campaign of the "anti" European Foundation, which was severely embarrassed in June by the disclosure that it was receiving financial assistance from Sir James Goldsmith, the founder of the Referendum Party, and which has a budget in the order of only £120,000 a year.

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air Radar unearths princely trove of buried gold

DAVID KEYS
Archaeology Correspondent

Unprecedented quantities of ancient South American gold and other treasures are expected to be discovered under a deserted pre-Inca city in northern Peru.

In a major archaeological investigation involving academics in Britain, the United States and Peru, two tombs - one of which is the largest excavated in the Americas - have been unearthed, and the positions of a further 12 have been found with the use of ultra ground-penetrating radar.

Archaeo-metallurgists at the Institute of Archaeology in London have been analysing the gold alloy objects found to establish their ritual and other uses.

The Peruvian site - known to archaeologists as Sican - will almost certainly yield hundreds of skeletons and thousands of gold and other artefacts. The larger of the two 1,000-year-old tombs

The smaller of the two tombs excavated has yielded five skeletons (one man, two women and two children) and several kilos of gold and gold alloy.

The male skeleton was still "wearing" a spectacular golden death-mask with eyes made of emeralds and the remains of a four-layer beaded cloak of turquoise, crystal, sodalite and sea shells. He was also covered with a layer of red pigment, possibly regarded as a magical potion to ensure that he continued to live in the spirit world.

About 500kg of scrap gold and gold alloy were also in the tomb - suggesting that the man buried there was involved in Sican's gold industry in contrast to the larger tomb's occupant who it is thought was connected to the textile industry.

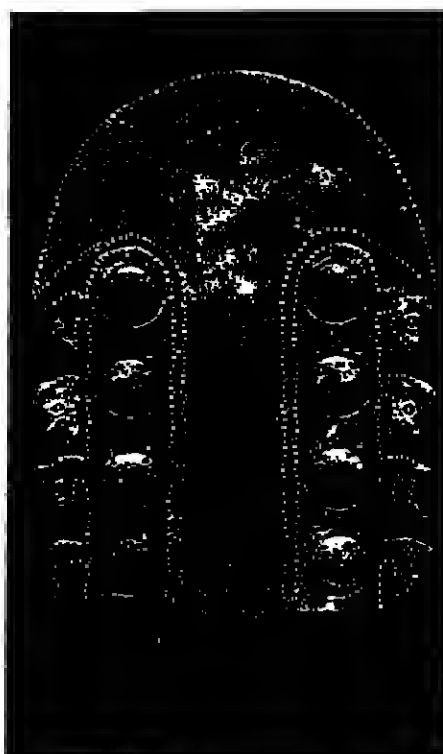
The whole burial complex of a pyramid, a long platform and 14 tombs form part of a much larger city which covered almost a square mile and consisted of dozens of public buildings including 10 more pyramids. This was the capital of a pre-Inca Peruvian state which in the 9th and 10th centuries AD controlled some 35,000 square miles of territory between Colombia and northern Chile.

The current excavations are changing the way scholars view treasures found earlier. Often unearthed by looters and treasure-hunters in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, many museum pieces were unprovenanced and have traditionally been seen as Inca in origin. Now many are being re-categorised as Sican and re-dated as being almost twice as old.

"The intensive scientific investigation into the Sican material being carried out here in Britain is of vital importance because the Sican tombs are the first of their type ever to have been scientifically excavated by archaeologists," Dr John Merkel, head of the London Institute of Archaeology metallurgical team analysing the Sican gold, said.

Professor Shimada described the dig as "an unparalleled opportunity to study the wealth and social elite of a pre-Inca society". "The Sican discoveries clearly show the importance of excavating these so-called treasures in an archaeological context so we can better understand their cultural significance," he said.

The professor said that the archaeologists hoped to continue excavating the site for several more years.



Tomb treasure: A gold alloy mask (main picture) with emerald and tree-resin eyes and a 10in-high gold ornament from a crown

Photographs: Sican Archaeological Project

'This is an unparalleled opportunity to study a pre-Inca social elite'

excavated consists of a 50ft-deep shaft and contained the remains of 24 people, including one very high status male - perhaps a high priest or a prince - aged 25-30, flanked by two women of 20-25, who appear to have been deliberately sacrificed to accompany him on his journey to the spirit world.

The other 21 skeletons - all of females aged 20-25, possibly also sacrificial victims - were buried in a dozen shallow graves on a ledge immediately above the main chamber.

In the chamber archaeologists led by a leading pre-Columbianist, the Japanese scholar Professor Izumi Shimada of Southern Illinois University in the US, discovered a beautiful gold and copper crown, a gold alloy mask with amber eyes, a pair of gold alloy gloves and a multi-layer necklace made of blue sodalite, turquoise, amber and shell.

The tomb has also yielded the extraordinary remains of 80 square feet of beautifully decorated gilded cotton cloth, perhaps used as a room partition.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL ROYAL MAIL CUSTOMERS.

PLANNED NATIONAL STRIKES BY COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION

Royal Mail regrets to inform you that the CWU is planning to continue strike action.

The union has called for strikes on Friday August 30th and Monday September 2nd - each for 24 hours.

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- Business customers should ring their normal Royal Mail contact for details.
- Following the strikes, deliveries and collections will resume on Saturday August 31st and on Tuesday September 3rd.

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We will be doing all we can to keep disruption to a minimum, using available resources for both collections from business customers and to ensure pillar boxes are emptied. We apologise for the inconvenience these strikes will cause and will ensure your services return to normal as soon as possible.



DAILY POEM

Sheep's Clothing

By Tobias Hill

Don't get me wrong. Your face is smooth
as clingfilm. But, my love, your voice has claws

and though (quite naturally) I'm pleased to say
that your fine hands do not resemble paws

there is a sweet, dark perfume on your breath
and I find I believe that it has teeth

- In many ways you look like death
warmed up. What is it that you keep

wound up, behind the puzzle-depth
of eyes that are so smiling bright?

I think there's a wolf in your sheep's clothing,
but you wear the clothing well.

Come out with me. The city smells
of terrace cakes in terrace houses,
rented rooms and private halls.

the mathematics of small lives; a point
is that which can't be split,
a lifeline is length without breadth -

Will you come out with me? Tonight
the Underground shakes the pavement
and the moon is a heart's-width.

Tobias Hill's first full collection *Midnight in the City of Clocks* is published by OUP in September. At 26, Hill has won a poetry prize on average every fortnight over the last two years, 74 of them British. A collection of short stories is published by Faber in 1997. His prolificacy alone makes him something of a phenomenon, but there is substance as well and a Fontaineian knack of storytelling to beguile.

THE INDEPENDENT

WATCH OUT FOR CORPORATE RAIDERS

This Saturday The Independent Magazine publishes a 16 page Essential Guide to American Football in association with the NFL

THE NFL STARTS SEPTEMBER 1ST
WILL YOU BE FOLLOWING
THE OAKLAND RAIDERS?

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Gore stakes claim for next time around

RUPERT CORNWELL
Chicago

Hardly had Al Gore entered the Democratic Convention on Monday night than the chants began: "Gore in Four, Gore in Four." Whether the summons was spontaneous, or pre-planned like most proceedings in the hall, is irrelevant. As with every convention featuring an incumbent president, Chicago '96 has a subtle subplot - the jockeying among potential party standard-bearers the next time around, in four years.

THE US
PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS

Almost from the day Bill Clinton took office, the least well-kept secret in Washington has been that Mr Gore wants to succeed where he failed in 1988, and win the top job for himself. And the clearest pointers to his ambitions have come - not from inside the United States but from the United States Center where he delivers his

vice-presidential acceptance speech tonight - but among the fringe events around town.

By the time the convention ends tomorrow, he will have spoken at 17 of them: at fund-raisers, and to audiences of labour activists, women and other key party constituencies. He will have made speeches not just to delegations from the giant states of California and New York, but to a couple of tiny ones - Iowa and New Hampshire, where the crucial first tests of the 2000 primary season happen to be scheduled.

But conventions are show-cases, and Mr Gore is not the only pretender on view in Chicago. His most obvious rival is the House Minority leader Richard Gephardt, who would become Speaker if the Democrats recapture Congress this autumn. Like Mr Gore, Mr Gephardt ran unsuccessfully eight years ago; and, like the Vice-President, he is everywhere to be seen this week.

No less menacing a potential rival is Christopher Dodd, the combative Connecticut Senator whose two years as Democrat-

ic National Committee chairman have seen him play a major role in recharging party morale after its 1994 mid-term disaster, and made him a familiar figure to grassroots activists across the country.

Queried about his plans for 2000, Mr Dodd trots out the standard answer: "I've never thought about it, the only thing that matters is November 5, and re-electing President Clinton."

But party leaders in the 42 states Mr Dodd has visited since 1994 might guess otherwise.

Inevitably, South Dakota's Tom Daschle, the Senate Minority leader, is mentioned too - though his disclaimers sound more convincing than Mr Dodd's. Another lurking figure is retiring Senator Bill Bradley of New Jersey, who toyed with making a primary challenge to Mr Clinton earlier this year. But events here confirm that the moderate Mr Bradley is admired - but little-loved.

The most intriguing name, however, is Evan Bayh of Indiana, popular Democratic Governor of a state which invariably

votes Republican in presidential elections, and assigned the distinction of giving last night's keynote speech. Another moderate, Mr Bayh is only 40, and already identified as the "next Clinton". He too, some feel, might take his chances in 2000.

But at this stage the odds overwhelmingly favour Mr Gore. Of the last eight vice-presidents, five later became their party's nominee and three went on to be president. A sitting vice-president can draw on the massive organisational and patronage clout of his boss.

Mr Gore has little of the speaking charisma of Mr Clinton, but appeals to both wings of the party. Liberals like his advocacy of social and environmental issues. But by Democrat standards he is hawkish on defence, an economic centrist, and, like Mr Clinton, a former stalwart of the moderate Democratic Leadership Council. Above all, he has pulled off the feat of being scrupulously loyal and subordinate to the President, while remaining very much his own man.

Leading article, page 11

Clinton's
caboose
campaign
trails onDAVID USBORNE
Toledo

They called it "The 21st Century Express" but the "Hello There Slow Coach" would be more appropriate. The train hearing Bill Clinton to the Democratic Convention in Chicago mostly creeps along and, for a good part of the time, the President likes to stand on the rear platform greeting anyone along the route.

And people there are. These are not the open fields of Wisconsin where, as one veteran reporter recalls, in 1976 the then President Gerry Ford, after a martini or two in his carriage on a whistle-stop tour of his own, started to regale the cows - for cows and fields were all that could be seen.

For residents along this one-track rail corridor through north-western Ohio it is as if a national holiday has been declared. Every level crossing, every back garden, every small-town junction is transformed into a Norman Rockwell tableau. Whole families, with their deck-chairs, picnic blankets and their children's little red wagons, have waited for our train to roll by. While local sheriffs stand to attention with their left hands raised in salute, the crowds wave their banners and press their video-recorder buttons, all against a backdrop of corn fields and grain elevators.

Gilded by the sun of a perfect summer's day, these are moving scenes - even for the most cynical heart. And when the train halts and we disembark for one more train-rail rally, the President gives the impression at least of being stirred himself. He gives his speech - tedious to those of us who have heard it so many times before in the day - and then descends into the crowds, to practise again the art he has mastered so brilliantly of mixing with the sea of outstretched hands, offering a word to each person he meets.

While many of us remember the bus trips the then candidate Clinton took with Al Gore through this same territory four years ago, this is an altogether more sophisticated operation. Like the old circus trains, what we are riding on here is, to be sure, the greatest campaign

show on earth. But Mr Clinton is the President and these carriages are doubling as a rolling White House, complete with Oval Office, offices for the staff, press room and, most critically, all the national security paraphernalia that must accompany the President.

What, for example, I ask one close aide to Mr Clinton, is that other train doing following half-a-mile behind us? Hadn't all normal traffic on this route been suspended for the day? "Oh, that train back there," he begins cautiously. "The secret service has asked us not to talk about that stuff. But I understand there is enough [weapony] on that train to start a small war."

The next car is what the staff have christened "technoworld". Jammed into every available space in a converted panorama car there are phone banks, computers and the hardware to maintain a satellite up-link to the world outside. Speech-writers toil over word processors, all presumably refining paragraphs of what will be the President's speech to the convention tomorrow evening.

Move further forward and you reach the briefing room and events car. "An excellent location for a briefing by the press secretary, don't you think?" says Mike McCurry, the White House spokesman, as we rumble past one more beanfield. "Yup," one reporter replies, "this briefing is really moving along". The journalists - all 150 of us - then occupy the front four double-decker coaches.

In Arlington, Bowling Green, and at our other stops along our Ohio route, the crowds are aware of none of this. They did not notice even that in speeches delivered at noon and at three in the afternoon the President, aware that his words were being recorded for retransmission at the Chicago convention hall later in the evening, referred repeatedly to "tonight" as if it were the moon, not the sun, that was beating on our heads. (And some say he is a fraud.) They only see what they were meant to see: a campaign spectacular of promises and hunting-clad patriotism.

"I shook his hand twice," said one thrilled grandmother. "I swear I'm not going to wash my hands for six months".



Pained plea: Christopher Reeve, the Superman actor paralysed in a riding accident, about to address the convention on the subject of caring

Photograph: AP

Syncopated schmaltz seeking an audience

Chicago Diary

The Democrats served up lightly flavoured, low-calorie fare on the opening day of their 42nd national convention. To the bland strains of Kenny G's saxophone - "elevator music", one wag called it - there was a movingly restrained video tribute to the late commerce secretary, Ron Brown, Edward Olmos Jr, the Hispanic Hollywood actor, delivered a plea for "love and compassion in the 21st century"; and Christopher Reeve, the Superman star paralysed after a horse accident last year, stated from his wheelchair that "America is stronger when all of us take care of all of us". Showbiz schmaltz took precedence over partisan rhetoric, the idea being to attract a bigger prime-time television audience than the Republicans did at their con-

vention in San Diego ago two weeks ago and to fix in the public mind an image of the Democrats as the party, in President Bill Clinton's phrase, that feels America's pain.

While most Americans seriously doubt whether it will make an iota of difference to their lives whether Mr Clinton or Bob Dole is in the White House next year, the mood music at the two conventions has served as a reminder that Republicans and Democrats are indeed two species of animal. The delegates at the Republican red-meat, conservative white males, a fifth of whom happened to be million-

aires. The Democratic delegates offered a more representative cross-section of America and the blacks and Hispanics present bled into the spirit of the event. When the official start of the Chicago convention was delayed by a few minutes, the music of "La Macarena", the dance craze from Spain which has set America alight in recent weeks, filled the amphitheatre of the United Centre, the basketball stadium of the Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls. Delegates of all shades from Arizona, Florida and Nebraska leapt to their feet, wiggled their hips, clapped their hands and clutched their huttocks with unchoreographed gusto.

Family values be damned. It was the mood on Sunday night at what was billed as "the convention's coolest party". The setting was a disco in Chicago's North Side called the Park West. Pointer Sister look-alikes exhorted the revellers to "do it one more time", an instruction a number of Democratic couples stopped just short of taking literally. One guest, wearing stilettos and a daring party dress, was taken away in a police van, apparently for stretching the bounds of drunken indecency.

Another study in contrasts. As has been provided by John Prescott, deputy leader of the Labour Party, who made three interferences which would never pass the lips of any serious contender for US political office. Once, at least, he stood on a public platform and used the word "comrades". He has also

said Labour appeals to all people, "irrespective of race, gender or sexual orientation". And he has owned that Britain can learn lessons from other countries. Were, say, Vice-President Al Gore to venture such thoughts out aloud, the November election would be all but lost. The Republican spin-doctors would make hay, seizing the conservative centre ground of US politics by portraying the Democrats as Communist, anti-American pervers. Republicans and Democrats might belong to different species but, as these political conventions have a habit of reminding one, Americans and Europeans inhabit different planets.

One American who appears to be drifting farther and farther into outer space is Louis

Farrakhan, a Chicago resident who told his audience at a convention of black journalists last week that they were a disgrace to their race, slaves of the white bosses who controlled the American media. This week it has emerged that the former nightclub singer - known as Calypso Gene before he discovered Islam - has gone on his knees before the US Treasury Department, begging to be allowed to pocket \$1bn (£660m) he says Muammar Gaddafi promised him on a "Friendship tour" to Libya earlier this year. He needs the money in part because he wants to hold a political convention of his own. Let's hope he gets it. American politics could do with a bit of Kenny-G-free dissension and rage.

John Carlin

Sarah Maitland
speaks up for
the First Lady
Page 13

Cuba jails US
fugitive over
'miracle drug'PHIL DAVISON
Latin America Correspondent

Robert Vesco, the onetime financier who fled United States justice for almost a quarter of a century, has been jailed for 13 years in Cuba for fraud and illegal economic activity.

Vesco, 60, wanted in the US for allegedly running off with \$224m (£148m) of investors' money from the Geneva-based Investors Overseas Services (IOS) in the 1970s, had lived in Cuba since 1982.

The Cuban woman he married in custody earlier this year, Lidia Alfonso, was jailed for nine years for helping him procure foreign investment in a "miracle drug" against Aids and cancer, allegedly behind the back of the Cuban authorities. Those are the facts of the court case, which Vesco has 10 days to appeal to Cuba's Supreme Court. But many Cubans believe there is far more to the story than meets the eye. For one thing, when Vesco was first detained in Havana on

31 May last year, Cuba accused him of being a "provocateur and foreign agent". That charge was mysteriously dropped shortly before this month's trial, in which he was accused only of economic crimes against the state.

Secondly, Vesco told the court he had never met Cuban President Fidel Castro. But he had said in the past that he had and they were widely rumoured to be good friends. Vesco used to move around Havana with a two-car bodyguard second in size only to that of Castro himself.

Thirdly, the key to the court case was that Vesco was trying to sell the drug behind Cuba's back. But Vesco denied this and pointed out that he had been developing the drug TX, or Tricidal, in the Havana laboratories of the state-owned Labiofarm pharmaceutical company.

And that brings us to the tale of the two presidents' nephews. Labiofarm is run by the Cuban leader's nephew, Fraga Castro. Donald Nixon Jr, nephew of the former US president, was



Vesco arriving at a Havana court earlier this month

working on the drug in Havana with Vesco and was detained in Vesco's home on the same day, 31 May last year. Mr Nixon was freed after several weeks of supervision in a Havana hotel.

The rumour spreading through Havana is that the "miracle drug" was showing signs of success, heralding a battle between Cuba on the one side, and Vesco, Mr Nixon and his US inventor on the other, over potential billion-dollar profits. Mr Nixon said he brought the drug, invented by a doctor friend, to Vesco in Havana four years ago for testing and development after it cured his wife of cancer. The inventor wanted to bypass the 10-12 year delay for approval in the US.

"I'm sitting on top of the biggest breakthrough in the his-

tory of man," Mr Nixon told *The Independent*. "I believe it would stop every disease including Aids. If you have herpes on your lip and you put it on immediately, it's gone. If you put it on a burn, it's gone within a minute."

Mr Nixon said the drug, extracted from the citronella plant, had been tested on Cubans aged from five to 80 with "rave results" and that the Cuban government had signed a development and production deal with the unnamed US inventor. "Our deal was that for every two doses, one would be sold abroad, one would be for free use by Cubans under the beat service."

"This could be worth one billion dollars a month. And the inventor will eventually receive the Nobel prize," Mr Nixon said.

Spain to replace
envoy in HavanaELIZABETH NASH
Madrid

Spain is expected to send a new ambassador to Cuba after just 15 months, reinforcing the tougher line taken by Jose Maria Aznar's conservative government towards the regime of Fidel Castro. The imminent nomination, reported in yesterday's *El Pais* newspaper, could open fissures in Mr Aznar's government.

It is hardly surprising that Mr Aznar would feel freer to take towards Mr Castro than did his socialist predecessor Felipe Gonzalez. One of Mr Aznar's first international initiatives, taken during a Spanish visit by the US Vice-President Al Gore in May, was to promise the United States full co-operation with its anti-Cuban measures proposed in the Helms-Burton law.

But the new Prime Minister swiftly recanted under a wave of protest from Spanish companies operating in Cuba who wield powerful clout in the ruling Popular Party. Within days of Mr Aznar's meeting with Mr Gore, the head of the giant Sol Melia hotel chain, owner of hotels in both Cuba and the US, said that if the Helms-Burton law - that would sanction foreign companies operating in

Cuba - were implemented, he would close his US operations rather than his Cuban ones.

In the months following, Mr Aznar was whipped into line with the rest of the EU when Brussels decided to take action against the Helms-Burton law, and the Foreign Ministry now says it "rejects [the law] totally". Spain has stronger economic ties with Cuba than has any other European country. Spanish tourism and construction companies operating in Cuba are an important pressure group in Madrid.

El Pais reports that the Foreign Minister, Abel Matutes, told the ambassador, Eudaldo Mirapeix, two months ago that he wanted him to stay, but was overruled by the Prime Minister who prefers Jose Coderch, a diplomat close to the former conservative prime minister, Adolfo Suarez.

The step would be a snub to Mr Matutes who, despite his experience as a former European Commissioner, and his influence in the business community, is considered to be outside Mr Aznar's close circle. As an entrepreneur, Mr Matutes is inclined to favour business relations with Cuba. The move also indicates a victory of ideology over economic pragmatism.



Farrakhan has decided that more votes will go to Clinton

Bosnia election

Cancer
poll re
Serb
defia



The director Claude Lelouch (left) on set with Bernard Tapie, the surprise of Lelouch's latest film in his new métier - acting

Photograph: to open.

Art imitates life as Tapie acts a new role

MARY DEJEVSKY
Paris

It had to happen and now it has. Bernard Tapie, the disgraced politician and crooked football manager whose name is a byword in France for the discredited flamboyance of the Eighties, has starred in a film - and the awful truth is that he does it rather well.

Establishment knives were out for Tapie long before the first whispers of his mid-life career change began to circulate a year ago: corruption convictions, failed appeals and bankruptcy had seen to that. Today, though, after a première last night at a Champs-Élysées cinema, the film critics will take over from the political commentators and Tapie the actor could well become as much of a hero as Tapie the politician was in his heyday.

To underline the transition, he is expected today to resign his parliamentary seat in southern France "to concentrate on his new career". In fact, he has little choice: his bankruptcy means he is barred from public office. For Tapie, though, if one door closes, another tends

In *Hommes, femmes, mode d'emploi* (Men and women: a user's manual), he plays Benoit Blanc, a successful lawyer with a penchant for helicopters, a gambler's instinct and a messy love life. He is the counterpart for Fabio Lini, a poor, aspiring actor whose pessimism knows no bounds.

They are brought together in a hospital waiting-room by a similar stomach complaint. The results of their tests are deliberately mixed up by a (woman) doctor who wants revenge on Blanc for an earlier indiscretion, and their predicament is resolved, in every respect, by a fantastical trip in his helicopter to the shrine of St Bernadette at Lourdes. Blanc's catch-phrase, "If you expect the worst, you are never disappointed", provides a leitmotif.

The film is hardly the work of a novice, nor is it a mere vehicle for Tapie. It is the latest work of Claude Lelouch, whose early films included *Un homme et une femme*. The cast contains some of the French cinema's best-known names, including Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anouk Aimée. Tapie is almost the only newcomer.

But you would not know it.

From his first appearance, he invites conviction in his new incarnation to an almost eerie degree.

It is now just about accepted that a film actor can become president of the United States but it also seems a blustering French politician can reverse the process and turn actor.

Cynics say Tapie was only ever an actor and is merely reverting to type. The truth is, though, that at a popular level, he has a considerable knack for timing.

His rapid political rise - to government minister - began under François Mitterrand. His eclipse paralleled that of the late president and his first day of filming coincided with Mitterrand's death. Despite his court convictions, including one for fixing a football match, he has retained considerable public sympathy.

Now there is a more than a risk that his performance on screen in a roguish but sympathetic role not unlike his erstwhile political image could eventually relaunch his career in politics. It might even help his bank balance: he is said to have a 25-per-cent stake in the film's profits.

Bosnia election: Local vote put off over registration irregularities

Cancelled poll rouses Serbs to defiance

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY
Sarajevo

The Bosnian local elections, the most contentious of those scheduled for 14 September, have been postponed in a move which will have important consequences for Bosnia and the US presidential elections. The Bosnian Serbs said they would go ahead with their own local polls anyway.

Robert Frowick, the ambassador of the international supervising body, said he had made a "chairman's decision" and the elections would probably be held in April or May, which means the peace implementation force, I-FOR, is likely to remain throughout winter.

The US diplomat cited irregularities in the Serbs' voter registration as one reason for postponement. The other four

side, opposition candidates have been harassed in the Muslim-Croat federation. In the Muslim city of Bihać, opposition supporters have been attacked with hand grenades and had election material confiscated.

Bosnia's 3 million voters will still vote for an individual for the three-person presidency of all Bosnia; for parties in an all-Bosnia assembly and for deputies to an assembly for either the Muslim-Croat federation or the Republika Srpska. In Republika Srpska they will elect a president, and in the federation an assembly in one of 10 cantons. But the elections in 109 municipalities in both halves of Bosnia have been cancelled.

The Dayton agreement which brought peace to Bosnia last November specified that presidential, national, and entity elections should take place by 14 September, and cantonal and municipal elections "if feasible".

Mr Frowick finally decided that they were not. "I took this decision after a very lengthy discussion," he said.

"The overriding factor had to be the integrity of the election process. I want to emphasise that all the rest of the elections - those that are required under the peace agreement - are on track."

The main problem concerned the registration of voters who were refugees abroad, or displaced persons driven from one part of Bosnia to another. Serbs driven out of federation territory have registered to vote where they now are, consolidating the ethnic purity of Republika Srpska, while many Muslims driven out of that area have chosen to vote - as Dayton entitles them to do - where they came from, although it is unlikely the Serbs will let them.

Under Dayton rules, the 52,000-strong peace force was mandated to supervise the elections next month and remain until 20 December. Asked what the effect of postponing the municipal elections until spring would be, Mr Frowick said: "It's up to I-FOR to respond. From my point of view, it would be advisable for some sort of international military force to remain here for some time."

Although some sort of Nato presence was expected after 20 December, the need to develop democratic conditions and keep the former warring factions from splitting the country in two means a large presence - including US troops - is now needed. But this will be bad news for President Bill Clinton in his election campaign.

Asked what he would do if the Serbs held their own elections, without international approval, Mr Frowick said the international community would have to decide before they did.



Frowick: Has decided that main vote will go ahead

elections scheduled for 14 September would go ahead. The decision was delayed until the last minute: the first of the 1,200 international election supervisors are due in Sarajevo today.

The announcement, following a meeting of the Provisional Election Commission, was a surprise, because voting among refugees in Turkey and Hungary had already started. The PEC was due to decide on Friday and when it postponed its decision until yesterday, many observers thought it would be too late to cancel them.

Yesterday Mr Frowick, ambassador for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which is supervising the polls, said the PEC had met to consider the advisability of proceeding with the elections in the face of widespread abuse. He has faced strong pressure from the US State Department to push ahead with the elections. Mr Frowick said: "We couldn't do this on a case-by-case basis. We had to take a sweeping view."

At the weekend, authorities in Republika Srpska, the Serb half of Bosnia, said that if the municipal elections were postponed, they would hold their own. As well as irregularities in voter registration on the Serb

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international



Road to ruins: Chechens returning to Grozny as the truce between Russian troops and rebel fighters takes hold

Photograph: Reuters

Yeltsin's war of nerves tries his peace emissary

Phil Reeves in Moscow considers why the President so distrusts Lebed

Moscow — As commanders from both sides of the Chechen war yesterday extended a fragile six-day peace by signing a new truce, one baffling question dominated all others. What is Boris Yeltsin playing at? Why is he snubbing his own envoy to the war zone, Alexander Lebed?

Three days ago the retired general interrupted his peace negotiations in Chechnya and rushed to Moscow, saying he wanted a meeting with the President to discuss the separatists' proposals for settling the war, which has cost 35,000 lives, drained the Kremlin's coffers, humiliated its army, and exposed Russia to international condemnation.

He needed the President's personal clearance before signing a deal. The details are unknown, but reports yesterday suggested they envisaged giving Chechnya "special status" within Russia, although a full settlement could be delayed for up to five years. The Chechen army, which the rebels want to be independent, but which the Russians want to oversee, is one sticking-point.

What was Mr Yeltsin's response? His aides announced he had left for a holiday. Mr Lebed, who is desperate for a quick settlement, waited around for two days before being ordered by the Kremlin yesterday to deliver a written report. According to the general's aides, only then would the President decide whether to interrupt his relaxation and see him, or talk to him by phone.

This is the second time Mr Yeltsin has turned a frosty shoulder to his peace envoy; last week he declared he was not "entirely satisfied" with Mr Lebed's mission, unaware that he was close to a truce. Why, Russians are wondering, is their president undermining his envoy at a crucial time?

Firstly, Mr Yeltsin appears to be trying to insulate himself from the backlash that will arise if a final settlement over Chechnya is reached. As the head of an unstable country, where the support of the military remains crucial, he wants Mr Lebed to bear the brunt of the ire of the die-hard generals, and senior officials in the "power" ministries — defence, security, and interior — who believe withdrawing from the Muslim republic is tantamount to a humiliating defeat.

Flak is already flying. The dominant Communist faction in parliament has alleged that the President granted "unconstitutional" powers to Mr Lebed as his Chechen envoy, which they plan to challenge in court. Its deputy speaker, Sergei Baburin, yesterday accused Mr Lebed of masterminding a "political crime" — the secession of

Chechnya from Russia. There are also more personal factors.

In the two months since his appointment as security tsar, Mr Lebed has provided the President with several reasons to bear a grudge. He was a moving force behind the firing of Mr Yeltsin's bosom pal and chief bodyguard, Alexander Korzhakov, as well as several other hawks.

He has embarrassed Mr Yeltsin by gaining his own choice of a Defence Minister, Igor Rodionov, before Mr Yeltsin had announced a decision (He gave Mr Rodionov the job). He has angered him by calling for the sacking of his Interior Minister, Anatoly Kulikov, at a press conference, which the President rejected. And, worse, he has shown a talent for the limelight that only he, Boris Yeltsin, can match.

Mr Lebed is proving to be highly media-savvy and popular with the press, which mostly backs his peace efforts. For a man with Mr Yeltsin's ego and sense of showmanship, this must be painful to behold.

However, whether Mr Yeltsin's strategy of snubbing his envoy is of his own making is questionable.

The President is in poor health. He also has a habit of abruptly cutting himself off from affairs, and heading off into the country to brood — especially after big events, such as the elections in July. The decision to shut out Mr Lebed could easily be the work of the President's staff, headed by Anatoly Chubais.

This is not the first time Mr Lebed has had difficulties with the Kremlin's inner circle; last week he suggested someone was issuing orders, using a facsimile of Mr Yeltsin's signature. Mr Chubais, the President's chief of staff, is committed to ending the Chechen war. But he is ambitious, and is no doubt keen to put down a rival. As a liberal, he is also likely to view Mr Lebed's accumulation of power, and his desire to oversee all the security structures, as alarmingly undemocratic.

SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Bulgaria's Supreme Court overturned death sentences and jail terms against 48 pre-Communist leaders and three royal regents imposed by a Communist court half a century ago. An official said the Supreme Court voted 2-1 to revoke convictions against the king's three regents as well as prime ministers and ministers for their responsibility for Bulgaria's involvement in the Second World War. A 13-member jury of the People's Court had sentenced to death 33 out of the 51 convicted officials and politicians in February 1945. All the death sentences were carried out. *Reuters - Sofia*

The Estonian parliament failed for a third and final time to elect a new state president, refusing a second mandate for incumbent Lennart Meri. Neither Mr Meri nor his rival Arnold Ruutel could garner the 68 votes needed from the 101 members of parliament to become president. The decision will now be made by a larger assembly. *Reuters - Tallinn*

Three Australian Catholic nuns held captive for 10 days by rebels in southern Sudan have told a mediator seeking their release they believe their freedom is imminent. The nuns are being held with three other missionaries by the Sudan People's Liberation Army rebels at Mapourdit, where the nuns were teaching, in the mainly Christian and animist south. They are accused of spying and being agents of Islam. *Reuters - Canberra*

An Arab community centre was demolished after a bulldozer was hoisted over the walls of Jerusalem, and officials approved the expansion of a West Bank settlement, fuelling Palestinian doubts about Israel's commitment to implementing the Oslo peace agreement. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat urged foreign envoys to put pressure on Israel to stop demolitions. Palestinian legislators rushed to the Old City to lead protests against the demolition, which they said showed that Israel's right-wing government was not committed to the peace process. A Jerusalem Municipality spokeswoman said the demolished community centre was built without a permit. In a separate move the government said it had approved the building of a new neighbourhood at a Jewish settlement in the West Bank. *Reuters - Jerusalem*

India will host the Miss World contest for the first time in November, with contestants from more than 90 countries. India also has the rights to the 1997 and 1998 contests. "This is an opportunity to expose our culture to the world," said Amitabh Bachchan, chairman and managing director of Indian media conglomerate Amitabh Bachchan Corporation Limited. "We expect the event to be a major boost to tourism in India," he said. "The cost of staging the 1996 event is expected to be between 70m (£1.3m) and 80m rupees," he said. *Reuters - Bangalore*

Two passengers attempting to take a snake and two hawks on to an Egyptian flight at Cairo airport were foiled by security officials. They found the snake in a bottle of mineral water hidden under a robe worn by one of the passengers. Customs officials detected the hawks while the other man's luggage was being X-rayed. The passengers said they were taking the snake and birds back to Kuwait, to give as a present and hunt with respectively. Airport authorities confiscated the animals. *Reuters - Cairo*

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150 من الاموال

As Glenn Hoddle's men embark on their World Cup journey into the unknown, **Trevor Haylett** reports on what they might find

Hodde, clearly, has better players from whom to choose. For Moldova's first competitive home fixture since independence from the former Soviet Union was granted in 1991, Wales were lacking Hughes, Rush, Giggs and Saunders and were woefully inexperienced at that level. Strong character was

Not so much a theatre of dreams as nightmares, perhaps. Moldova's ground and other examples of its similarly simple life

Photographs: Empics (main picture)/Magnum

World Cup qualifying guide,
pages 6 and 7

هَكَذَا مِنْ الْأَصْلِ

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Not so much a feast as an appetiser

BEING THERE

The Barbarians once were a main course on the Welsh rugby menu. Now they are just a starter, writes **Geoffrey Nicholson**

Since BBC Wales was showing the Barbarians live last Saturday, it sold the game hard all week. A Hannibal Lecter look-alike stared out from behind bars, teeth clacking excitedly, to promise "a feast of running rugby". Then up came the title, *The Silence of the Baa-Baas*.

More striking, meanwhile, was the comparative silence of the Welsh Rugby Union. The Barbarians were playing at the Arms Park by their invitation, and to dignify the occasion they were awarding international caps, which now seem to come up with the rubens. (How can you have an international when there's only one nation playing? Oh well, never mind.) Talking on the phone a few days before, Geoff Windsor-Lewis, the Barbarians' secretary, said he'd heard that Wales were also paying win bonuses, "which is a bit regrettable". Winning at a price is not what Barbarian rugby is supposed to be about. Especially at an extra £2,000 a head.

But beyond these gestures, the WRU hadn't done a lot to promote the match and seemed to be keeping their eyes fixed on a future beyond it. They also had France, Italy, Australia and South Africa to play before Christmas, a World Cup to put on in 1999 and a dispute to settle with their own clubs over the proposed Anglo-Welsh competition. The Barbarians were just the first of the stepping stones across a crocodile-infested sea.

It didn't help matters that last week's Welsh squad sessions were held in camera, so wiping out photo and interview opportunities. Or that by chance on Friday, while the Barbarians trained, the WRU produced a counter-attraction, the launch of their "Run with the Dragon" scheme to foster junior rugby. And pricing match tickets at £15 and £20 was an offer that, after Wales's forgettable summer tour of Australia, their sceptical supporters could only too easily refuse.

As depicted by the Gresco Valley school of writing, the day of the Big Match in Cardiff means a human tide of caps and mufflers flowing towards the Arms Park; hymns and the feasts of beveros on every lip; the rude, convivial jostling around the gates in Westgate Street, backlit by courtesy of Emlyn Williams. That sort of fervour hasn't been seen since the 1970s. But on the showery Saturday morning, as people queued by the half-dozen at the temporary ticket office, there wasn't even a reminiscent sniff of it.

After the match began, the official crowd figure was given as 19,000, compared with the 32,000 at Murrayfield the week before when the Barbarians played Scotland. A far more emotional occasion, of course, to aid the Dunblane appeal. All the same, there were no unaccompanied bare expanses around the stadium, and even in the press box many rugby correspondents from the nationals had, in AJ Leibling's eloquent phrase, "come disguised as empty seats".

The game, like the attendance, turned out to be no more than moderate. Agustín Pichot, the Barbarians' Argentinian scrum-



Capped in Cardiff: After Wales's forgettable summer tour of Australia, ticket prices of £15 and £20 were an offer supporters found all too easy to refuse

Photograph: Christopher Jones

The announcer asked spectators 'not to run on the field afterwards'. Had it really occurred to anyone to do so?

attack in one direction while the defence moved in the other. And Rob Howley, largely upstaged by Pichot, finally stole the show as he sped dangerously up the touchline like a high-wire artist on a unicycle. His try rounded off a 31-10 victory for Wales.

Yet the Welsh still played like strangers, not really making space for one another or seeming to trust those outside them. Even when they had an overlap, they would turn back to their forwards. And though they did

their best to keep the ball in their hands and play running rugby, it was only at times that they played a flowing game.

Meanwhile, in the face of hard Welsh tackling and foraging, the Barbarians weren't strong enough to impose their own traditional style.

The Welsh camp were relieved at the result. "It was pleasing," said their coach, Kevin Bowring, "to play at home again, to win and to score five tries. But the players will also be disappointed, knowing that they should have scored three times as many points."

But the spectators didn't know quite what to make of it. Wales had won, but what was that worth against a scratch side of such varied quality? In the closing minutes, the announcer asked spectators "not to run on the field afterwards". Had it really occurred to anyone to do so? It seemed unlikely.

Since they had scored only two tries, it was easier to blame the losers for this sense of anti-climax. But few rushed to judgement since Cardiff has had a soft spot for the Barbarians for almost a century. Their four-match Easter tour of South Wales, begun in 1901 and becoming an annual fixture from 1925, was immensely popular during the post-war boom in spectator sport. And when in 1948 they were persuaded to put up a team for a farewell game against the Australian tourists, they played it at the Arms Park to guarantee a maximum gate. It was not un-

til the eighth such match, against the 1967 All Blacks, that Twickenham got a look in.

The Barbarians' insistence on playing with style and opportunism, not just playing to win, provided the gala ending to the Welsh season. They set up camp at the Esplanade hotel in Penarth, where they played on Good Friday. On Saturday, it was Cardiff before crowds of up to 35,000 – near-records for club rugby. Sunday, golf on the Penarth course. Then on Monday and Tuesday more games at Swansea and Newport. After which, there being no league or cup competition to detain them, the players turned to oiling their cricket bats.

The club prided itself on having no money and no home. And it was also their custom not to announce the team captain in advance; it was as if the players picked him on the way out through the tunnel. That sounds democratic enough; in reality, the Barbarians could be highly autocratic. While willing to promote from the ranks, they expected officer-like behaviour in return. Horseplay and getting sloshed were one thing; uncouth conduct and insubordination were another. Unconscious breaches of etiquette in the bar cost many gifted players their Baa-Baas blazer badge and tie. Pity, but there were plenty more yearning to take their place.

In the last decade, with club and international competition becoming more intense, the Easter tour has been reduced to

a series of flying visits, and the Barbarians have found it harder to attract suitable players and fixtures.

It seems to follow that professionalism will close the last loophole for this Victorian gentlemen's club. Not so, Windsor-Lewis argues. It will make the Barbarian approach even more attractive as relief from

ers who aren't getting first-team rugby. We don't pay our players, but we do look after them. We make it clear to them – you can have the house wine if you're happy with it. But if you want something better, that's OK with us. We have a lot of goodwill, and I believe that in a few years' time we could emerge stronger than ever."

After Saturday's game Pene, Barbarians captain on the day, was asked whether Wales had improved since he last played them as an All Black, and whether they had been right to award caps for the match. An instinctive Barbarian, he said they had played pretty aggressively, their rucking was good and their back row had been everywhere. "And if the WRU thought this was a good enough game to deserve caps, that's up to them. Jesus, I'd make a good politician."

Mickey Steele-Bodger, the president, was only a little less diplomatic. But without blaming anyone directly, he made it clear that the game hadn't compared with the one at Murrayfield. "It was flat by last week's standards. That was a superb game. This one didn't take off. You can never say exactly why this happens. It might be differences in the opposition, the atmosphere, even the refereeing. Anyway, it takes two sides to play the game."

Unspoken was the thought that the two sides might have been playing to quite different agendas.

'If the WRU thought this was a good enough game to deserve caps, that's up to them'

the grinding rigours of pro rugby. "Over the last 18 months, the game has been turned pretty much upside down and is in a real mess, which has still to be sorted out."

"But we're having a tremendous response from the Southern as well as the Northern Hemisphere. And those players want us to stay as we are, an amateur club," Windsor-Lewis says. "They're more than happy with that. After all, the big clubs are building squads of 35-40 players, and the scope is there for us to support top play-

Pay up or they'll take their ball and go home

Imagine David Dein, Peter Hill-Wood (or whoever runs Arsenal these days) dropping unsubtle hints that unless a good deal of local taxpayers' money was forthcoming from the city, Arsenal would move lock, stock and barrel to some other more obliging borough or city. Or West Ham demanding tax-payers' help for a move from a bit more central to somewhere a bit more central – say an underused corner of Kensington or Westminster with development potential. Impossible, you will say, and you would be right. But in America, this sort of thing is happening every month.

The two biggest growth areas in the US construction industry these days are sports stadiums and prisons. Let sociologists determine whether this signifies the terminal decadence of America; the fact is that all four US major league sports – baseball, football, basketball and ice hockey – are affected, and none so much as the national pastime. Of the 28 major league clubs, no less than 18 have within the past five years either moved to a spanking new stadium, announced

firm plans to do so or threatened to do so. Scoff not at this last category. The owners of American sports franchises invariably get their way, for a simple reason. There is the father and mother of a seller's market.

The four sports operate self-regulating oligopolies. The number of teams has been allowed to grow more slowly than the money a richer society is ready to spend on entertainment. Too much money, in other words, chasing too few goods. From cities desperate to gain or hang on to major league teams, the owners can demand sweetheart deals to make a mafioso blush. For fans, however, the blessing is mixed. State-of-the-art amenities are wonderful, higher ticket prices less so. Worst of all is the knowledge that if someone else pays more, your beloved team may simply vanish.

In the case of baseball, the makeover began with new "old-look" baseball stadium that opened for business in Baltimore, Cleveland and Dallas-Fort Worth between 1992 and 1994 – all of them huge critical successes. No matter that the Atlanta Braves' present home of Fulton

SPORT IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

In the US, team owners are holding cities to ransom, says **Rupert Cornwell**

County Stadium is less than 30 years old, and good for at least another 30. Next year it will be pulled down as the Braves move to the new Olympic Stadium across the street. Now voters in Seattle, Detroit and Milwaukee, among others cities, have approved new local taxes to help finance similar arenas for themselves.

Owners in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Houston want to replace ugly multi-purpose arenas from the 1960s and 1970s, now used

for football as well, with baseball-only stadia. San Francisco plans a new ballpark and so, saddled of all for baseball nostalgics, does Boston. Fenway Park, synonymous with those eternal bridesmaids of baseball the Boston Red Sox and arguably the most picturesque stadium of all, lacks space for lucrative corporate boxes. So, before the millennium, down it will come, too.

Nowhere, though, do the antics match those of George Steinbrenner, owner and impresario of the New York Yankees. No matter that the Yankees, the most famous and history-laden franchise in the land, virtually are the Bronx. Mr Steinbrenner finds the area distinctly unsalubrious. Never mind the traffic problems; he wants to move the team to a new stadium in lower Manhattan. If the Big Apple does not come through with the financing, mutters Mr Steinbrenner, he will move the team to New Jersey.

Nothing so much as the \$1bn Manhattan Project of Mr Steinbrenner reveals the clout of sports owners. Indisputably, in some cases, a new sta-

dium – average cost \$200m to \$250m – can revitalise a moribund city. The prime example is Cleveland, which actually built two, one for the baseball Indians, the other for the basketball Cavaliers, and in the process endowed itself with a new self-belief. Detroit, arguably the direst specimen of inner-city decay in the Northern Hemisphere, hopes for an even greater miracle from rehousing the baseball Tigers and the football Lions in adjacent stadia on the very edge of its ravaged downtown.

But the Steinbrenner gambit, driven by vanity, has no such logic. Nor did the move of the Cleveland Browns football team to Baltimore, driven purely by greed. Baltimore offered a new stadium bursting with sky-boxes and corporate suites. Art Modell, owner of the Browns, and whose lease at Cleveland's decrepit Municipal Stadium was about to run out, had no hesitation. Poetic justice for Baltimoreans, who have never forgotten how their beloved Colts football team decamped to Indianapolis back in 1984. But who's going to bribe a team to come to Cleveland?

SPORTING VERNACULAR

No 11 DRIbble

"Dribble" aptly illustrates the characteristic oddness of sporting vernacular. Babies and others with minimal control over their faculties dribble, usually with their mouths, and usually they grow out of it. Footballers dribble, too, but usually with their feet – and they spend many hours learning the habit.

In 1880, the *Times* opined: "There is no more legitimate and scientific form of football than... 'dribbling' with the feet." Twenty years earlier, the *Football Annual* had noted that the spread of dribbling skills was changing the character of the game: "The supporters of football appear now to have arranged themselves in two great and distinct factions; the 'dribblers' and the admirers of the running and hacking style." This split persists to some extent, but the subtlety of the *Football Annual's* observation holds good: quality dribbling is a more exciting style of play than "running and hacking".

It isn't just football that has scope for use of this skill. In fact, all ball games can benefit from a bit of dribbling. It has been a part of gaming

vernacular – from billiards to polo – for a very long time. The sporting use of the word seems to have origins in archery. "Believe it not that the dribbling dart of love can pierce a complete bosom," wrote a popular Elizabethan commentator in his play *Measure for Measure*.

The link between dribbling of a liquid and dribbling of a ball becomes clear when one watches a player who can weave a ball along a complicated series of twists and turns – who can do a "mazy dribble", as it is sometimes called. When the player's skill is such that the movement of the ball is smoothly liquid, they have achieved the dictionary definition of dribbling: "to let anything flow or fall in drops or a trickling stream".

Effortlessness, real or merely apparent, is the most essential part of the dribbler's art. Whether baby or footballer, the dribbler cannot appear to expend too much effort on their task, or else dribbling becomes spitting or even spraying. Pity the footballer (and the baby) who can't dribble but only sprays.

Ben Summers

He admits he was tempted by the call of the *Azzawi*, who were so impressed with the talent he showed as a teenager they dangled before him all sorts of incentives to change his allegiance.

coming soon... rugby 5

This is the season that everyone — players, coaches and administrators — wanted. It has long been argued that English club rugby has been holding back the development of the national side, allowing the Southern Hemisphere countries to

The intake of electrifying talent such as Martin Offiah, Henry Paul, Jason Robinson and Va'aiga Tuigamala will bring in the crowds, initially at least, but it will also add a dimension to the game. As will the presence of so many overseas players such as Michael Coker, Philippe Sella, David Coker, the Liwelyn brothers, and the New Zealander John Mitchell. Young players will be able to learn from these incomers.

If the England coach, Jac

As to who will win what is, potentially, one of the most exciting. Courage Clubs Championships — that has to be the game of rugby. It is likely that the same old names will be there at the finish; success after all, breeds success. New names will join the giants but this time round there will be little need to look any further than Bath, Leicester, Wasps and Harlequins, the gang of four who have between them won everything since 1984.

A high-contrast, black and white photograph of a man, likely a musician, in a dynamic pose. He is wearing a dark shirt with prominent horizontal white stripes. He is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The background is dark and textured, possibly a stage or a wall with some elements. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting his face and the stripes on his shirt.

Philippe Sella, the former French international centre, complements Saracens' back line



Frano Botica, Castleford's New Zealand outside-half, steps out for Orrell



New Zealand-born Va'aiga Tuigamala flying from Wigan to Wasps



Laurent Cabannes brings French polish from Paris to the Harlequins back row



Michael Lynagh, the Australian highflyer, backs Saracens Photographs: Allsport

When would you think our pre-season training started? Before this era of professionalism began, you may have said August, leaving a good month to prepare the body and mind, and invent a few new backs moves which are sure to bring you a hat full of tries.



TONY UNDERWOOD

The goal posts were set there and training resumed in earnest to continue relentlessly until our first real test, a tour to the Bahamas. At least that is what I and many others thought when I set out on a few weeks' holiday. On my return, things had changed to the somewhat less enchanting destination of the high veldt in South Africa. No doubt a bigger test of our progress than the Bahamas, but even more a test of our ability

We are a side who must counter everyone's immediate doubt. A team of individuals, they say. Pooled together at great expense, are they likely to want to spill blood for each other? You can understand the doubters. We can understand and accept their apologies come the end of this season.

Club-by-club guides by David Llewellyn

هَكَذَا مِنْ الْأَصْلِ

6 coming soon...

WEDNESDAY 28 AUGUST 1996 THE INDEPENDENT SUMMER OF SPORT

World Cup at point of overload

The 1998 World Cup will be the biggest yet. So too the qualification headaches, says Glenn Moore

I will not start for the English, Scottish and Irish until the weekend, but, for some countries, the 1998 World Cup is already over. Antigua, who have never qualified for a World Cup despite playing Viv Richards in one campaign, were the first to go, hit for six goals by Dominica back in March. The Caribbean island has since been joined in the land of broken dreams by more than two dozen of the original 173 entrants. They include 1982 finalists Algeria (which will be a relief to Germany).

Algeria's defeat by unfancied Kenya is the shock of the tournament so far, but bigger ones will come as the qualifying tournament unfolds over the next 15 months. Argentina, for example, are already struggling in the South American qualifiers. The main surprises will, however, be in Europe, where places are once more at a premium. Although Fifa, the world's governing body, has again succumbed to elephantitis, expanding the World Cup to 32 countries, there are only 15 available to Europe - including the hosts, France.

That may seem plenty, as recently as Argentina in 1978 there were only 16 finalists in total. Yet Europe had 11 finalists even then and, though African football in particular has improved enormously (note Nigeria's Olympic win), Europe maintains an unrivalled strength in depth. Brazil may have won the last World Cup, but the other seven quarter-finalists were from Europe (and only three of those also made the last eight of Euro 96).

Several leading European countries are thus in danger of missing the party in 1998, among them England. They have been drawn in arguably the strongest of Europe's nine groups. Italy, despite failing in Euro 96 and the Olympics, have a lot of quality at their disposal, and trips behind the former Iron Curtain will not be easy.

It is on those journeys, beginning with the weekend visit to Moldova, that England's progress will be decided. Only the group winners qualify automatically along with the best of the nine runners-up. The other eight runners-up pair off into play-offs with the four winners going



Roberto Baggio of Italy hangs his head after his miss in the penalty shoot-out that gave Brazil victory in the 1994 World Cup final

Photograph: Andre Camera/Reuters

'Uefa's capitulation over Champions' League places shows the way the financial wind is blowing'

powers by such measures as the five-day rule (which forces clubs to release players), but Uefa's capitulation over Champions' League places shows the way the financial wind is blowing. At present, it is a problem exclusive to Western Europe - in other areas the national side takes pre-eminence. South American countries still put their players into national camps for months on end while Algeria reacted to their World Cup exit by suspending their domestic league.

A similar response by the Premiership is inconceivable. Indeed, there will be those in the Premiership who would be pleased if England lost in Moldova. As a Scotsman, Alex Ferguson would find it hard to suppress a snigger anyway, but the thought that half his team would be resting in the summer of 1998 is a tempting one. There were few tears at Old Trafford over the absence from Euro 96 of Eric Cantona, Ryan Giggs and Roy Keane.

International coaches react that club players benefit from being involved in international football - Glenn Hoddle said as much about David Beckham this week. A similar argument is usually put forward about European club football - that experience of it improves players' international performances.

And yet, would Steve McNamara, Alan Shearer, Gary Neville, Stuart Pearce and Paul Gascoigne have been as impressive in Euro 96 if their clubs had been involved in draining European competitions until the end of May? English clubs were regular trophy-winners in Europe in the 1970s yet failed to qualify for two World Cups. In 1986 and 1990, when they were banned from Europe, they reached a quarter-final and a semi-final.

It is the usual problem of too many matches and it is one reason why, despite the ease of air travel, the logical extension of World Cup qualifying to be truly global is unlikely to happen. While a qualifying group of England, South Africa, Thailand, Tahiti and Chile is an attractive one, the logistical problems appear insurmountable. As far as the people who pay the wages - the clubs - are concerned, Moldova is far enough.

through. If England fail to top Italy, they will need to do very well against Ireland, Moldova and Georgia if they are to gain that best runners-up spot. Scotland - the only Euro 96 finalist in their group - and the Republic of Ireland, paired with ageing Romania, can harbour genuine hopes of

winning their groups. For Northern Ireland and Wales, the aim may be more modest.

It would take an exceptional performance for Northern Ireland to head either Germany or Portugal, while Wales, who have already begun their campaign, seem ill-equipped to

beat the Netherlands or Belgium.

If they do not qualify, it is important that they do well. Such has been the explosion in European nations (50 entrants this time, against 36 in 1994) there is a very real chance that, come the next European Championships or World Cup, pre-qualifying will be in-

troduced to reduce fixture overload.

Such a move would be welcomed - possibly forced - by the big European clubs. Roy Evans merely articulated the thought of many managers when he said, at the weekend, that football must be the only industry in which companies (ie, Liverpool) lead

their assets (Jamie Redknapp) to another (England) and get them back broken without compensation.

The club-country argument is an old one, but, in the wake of the big clubs' growing commercial involvement and muscle, the balance is changing. Fifa has been keen to enforce national

EUROPEAN QUALIFYING GROUPS

The nine group winners and the best runner-up qualify. The eight other runners-up will be drawn in pairs, the four winners also qualifying for the finals. France

Group One

Denmark, Greece, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina

The Balkan conflict is transferred to the football field in this qualifying group. Not much travelling lies in store for any team except group seeds Denmark, who should soon become familiar with the flight path they take this weekend to Slovenia.

The Danes, now coached by a Swede, Bo Johansson, have missed out on the last two World Cup finals. The only team familiar to them here is Croatia, who in effect ended their European Championship title defence with a 3-0 win at Hillsborough in June. The rematch between Peter Schmeichel and Davor Suker should be especially engaging. Presumably, the Manchester United goalkeeper will be harassed to his goalpost the next time they meet.

The two Euro 96 finalists will expect to fill the top two places, although Greece, qualifiers for USA 94, could be in the reckoning again. They have already made a promising start, beating Slovenia 2-0 in April. And in Denis Nikolic, Srdar and Gulin-lukalike Babista they have a potent forward quartet.

There is little World Cup experience in this group. Croatia, Slovenia and Bosnia-Herzegovina are competing under an independent flag for the first time, while Denmark and Greece have both reached the finals just once before.

Forecast: 1 Croatia, 2 Denmark

Italy, England, Poland, Georgia, Moldova

A baptism of fire for Glenn Hoddle. It is unlikely England could have been drawn in a tougher group. Having gone almost three years without journeying abroad for a competitive match they must now travel three times to intimidating Eastern European venues - Tbilisi, Georgia being the scariest of the lot - before ending their jaunt with a trip to Italy.

Maximum points at Wembley - and three in Moldova on Sunday - would appear to be a must if England are to snatch the one automatic qualifying place from the Italians.

Even though Italy departed Euro 96 in the early stages, they were one of the more attractive exhibits on show. Coach Arrigo Sacchi has successfully dodged all the knives hurled at him by the Italian media and remains in place. He managed a wry smile at the draw ceremony in Paris when the Italians were paired with England. But it doubtless disguised a secret fear.

Italy have not been absent from the finals of a World Cup for 40 years. If Hoddle's England can maintain their Euro 96 momentum, the Azzurri are in serious danger of missing out. Somehow, though, you just can't quite see that happening...

Forecast: 1 Italy, 2 England

Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Hungary, Azerbaijan

All five teams must be happy with their lot. Azerbaijan apart, they will all entertain a fighting chance of qualifying from what is a distinctly mediocre group.

Norway and Switzerland both made it to the 1994 finals but are fading forces now. The Norwegians petered out dramatically in the Euro 96 qualifiers, but long-ball guru Egil 'Drillo' Olsen, the coach who put Norwegian football on the map, remains fireproof to criticism.

The Swiss have changed their coach once again, bringing Rolf Fringer back from German club VfB Stuttgart to take over from the miscast Arne Senneker. Whether Fringer can direct a flashback to the halcyon Hodgson days remains open to doubt. USA 94 star Alain Suter, a national martyr after being overlooked for the Euro 96 squad, last week rejected Fringer's plea to return to the team. Not a good sign.

Hungary, last seen sinking in the rain at Wembley in May, are still firmly stranded in their long, dark tunnel. The Under-21 team's qualification for the Olympics was a brief shaft of light, but coach Janos Csank still has an enormous task in front of him. Ditto Richard Muller-Nielsen, the man who took the Danes to European glory in 1992 and now boss of Finland, the puppets of Scandinavian football in recent years.

Forecast: 1 Norway, 2 Switzerland

Sweden, Scotland, Austria, Latvia, Belarus, Estonia

Another fair-to-middling group. Scotland, on a high after some encouraging club performances in Europe, must be confident of making it to the finals as they did on five successive occasions from 1974-1990.

Craig Brown's men face one of their most difficult fixtures this Saturday, when Austria, similarly buoyant on the European club front, entertain them in Vienna. The Austrians helped to bring a premature end to Jack Charlton's Republic of Ireland reign in the Euro 96 qualifiers, beating the Irish 3-1 at home and in Dublin. Austrian players are now sought all over Europe and Herbert Prohaska's team have won their last three friendlies.

Sweden were humiliated in the European qualifiers, winning just two of their eight matches. But they were good enough to finish third in the 1994 World Cup, and with the same coach (Tommy Svensson) and most of the same players (Martin Dahlin, Stefan Schwarz, Kennet Andersson etc) they must be favoured to win the group. Their 5-1 thrashing of Belarus in June offered plenty of early encouragement, but a 1-0 home defeat by Denmark a fortnight ago was not the result they wanted in preparation for Sunday's hazardous trip to Latvia.

Forecast: 1 Sweden, 2 Scotland

Russia, Bulgaria, Israel, Cyprus, Luxembourg

The two heavyweights of Group Five, Russia and Bulgaria, do not come face to face for another year. That should allow their respective new coaches - Boris Ignatiev and Hristo Bonev - a gentle and uncomplicated introduction to World Cup combat. For there is little to worry either side in this section.

Israel, the strongest of the three potential also-rans, have stalked everything on beating Bulgaria and Russia at home in their first two matches. If that play fails, the two Eastern Europeans should have the group to themselves. Cyprus and Luxembourg have both made forward strides in recent years, but they will do little more than pick up a few points here and there.

Bulgaria were World Cup semi-finalists in the United States and almost reached the latter stages of Euro 96. But the Stoichkov generation is now beginning to look grey and crinkly. Adequately replacing the old guard will not be easy for new coach Bonev.

Russia have a wider pool of quality players to choose from. The team let themselves down at Euro 96, playing well only in fits and starts and failing to win any of their three games. They are seasoned qualifiers, however, and with top calibre players such as Kanchelskii, Tsybelsky and Karpin on board, Russia should make it to France.

Forecast: 1 Russia, 2 Bulgaria

Spain, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Yugoslavia, Malta, Faroe Islands

What earns it the 'Group of Death' tag is the inclusion of Yugoslavia. Banned from the qualifying stages of both USA 94 and Euro 96, Yugoslavia slid down Uefa's ranking list and were placed in the fourth layer of the draw. On footballing quality alone they should have been ranked at least two grades higher. With the likes of Savićević (Milan), Mijatovic (Real Madrid) and Jugovic (Juventus) to call upon, Yugoslavia will be a daunting opposition for anyone. They already have six points and nine goals in the bag to prove their case.

Spain have not lost a competitive match in 90 minutes since March 1993 (a 1-0 defeat away to Denmark). Javier Clemente's team proved their mettle at Euro 96 where only a French referee and an English goalkeeper denied them progress beyond the quarter-finals.

The Czechs, of course, reached the Euro 96 final and even came close to winning it. Poborsky, Nedved et al surprised everybody with their skilful and spirited performances. But that was then. Now coach Dusan Uhrin must rally his troops once more. Spain, Yugoslavia and especially Slovakia will be eager to bring the Czechs back down to earth with a bump.

Forecast: 1 Spain, 2 Yugoslavia

Holland, Belgium, Turkey, Wales, San Marino

Carl Bobby Gould's team boldly go where no Welsh side has gone since 1958? Eight months ago, most Welsh supporters groaned with familiar discontent when they saw their team grouped alongside two Euro 96 qualifiers, the Netherlands and Turkey, and World Cup regulars Belgium. But now, with their opponents all-undergoing transition, the future looks brighter.

It certainly doesn't look too orange at the moment. Holland are still trying to come to terms with their 4-1 mauling by England at Euro 96. Coach Guus Hiddink is probably lucky still to have his job. But nobody can deny him the task of building a new team out of 11 shattered egos. The international retirement last week of captain Dennis Blind was certainly not music to Hiddink's ears.

Belgium and Turkey also have problems to solve. The Belgians have been ever-present at the World Cup since 1952, but a massive improvement is required under new coach Wilfried Moer. If they are to make it, the tournament's out of this.

The Turks must pick themselves up again after their Euro 96 whitewash. There is a fragile temperament, and the knowledge that they were out of their depth in England could be a wound that takes time to heal.

Forecast: 1 The Netherlands, 2 Belgium

Group Eight

San Marino, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Faroe Islands

San Marino, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Faroe Islands

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world cup football 7

If football is an art form, Platini plans a masterpiece

From Bordeaux to Lens, the 1998 World Cup will be a moveable feast. Nick Bidwell spoke to the midfield wizard turned organiser about his 'competition of smiles'

These are times of disillusionment in France, bitterness caused, among other things, by persistently high unemployment levels and a muddled – if not reactionary – immigration policy. But one project they are making a decent fist of across the Channel is the groundwork for the next World Cup finals, France 98.

Initial dithering about the site of a new national stadium in Paris and wrangles concerning the funding of building work at the Stade Velodrome in Marseille have long been settled. As the qualifying phase, which will whittle down the 172 entrant nations to 30 finalists plus hosts France and holders Brazil, moves up a gear, the former French international, now organising committee co-president, Michel Platini, is happy to make optimistic noises on his country's preparations for the tournament kick-off on 10 June 1998.

"Since we were awarded the World Cup four years ago and even before then, many people in France have been toiling away in an effort to produce the best tournament ever," Platini says. "I suppose the same claims are made every four years, but we really mean it."

"Increasing the number of World Cup finalists from 24 to 32 did result in a few minor organisational, logistic and financial problems. But now the lion's share of our work has been completed or is on course to be. Football is the most popular sport in France and I'm sure we will put on a great show in 1998."

The French have always nurtured a romantic view of their football – if Pelé had not dubbed it "the beautiful game", you can be sure a Gallic observer would have – and this idealised concept of soccer as art form is very much at the heart of their plans for 1998. Michel Platini is realistic enough to concede that a World Cup at the far-end of this century is inextricably linked with big-business partners, marketing dollars and astronomical television rights.

Yet he does not see his baby as a reworking of the crass commercialism so recently on offer in Atlanta, preferring to emphasise the human aspect of world football's showpiece.

"Off the pitch it will be a hi-tech tournament," Platini says. "But just as importantly, we want a competition of smiles and entertainment. Our stadium will be surrounded by our French culture, the architectural and natural beauty of our country."

Wembley-lookalike ground built on an island in the middle of the Garonne River, and even the slag heaps viewed on the horizon from the Stade Felix Bollaert in Lens, there will be a backdrop for all tastes.

Nine of the 10 venues to have the honour of hosting France 98 – Lens in the north; Nantes to the west; Bordeaux, Toulouse and Montpellier in the south-west; Marseille, Lyon and Saint-Etienne in the south-east, and

Stade de France in the south and there is absolutely no World Cup presence in the east. Certainly, organisers were keen for the Alsacian capital, Strasbourg, to host the party, but the Socialist municipal administration of the mayor, Catherine Trautmann, declined, unwilling to contribute to the bill of transforming the city's Stade de la Meinau into a 35,000 all-seater stadium. They instead opted to invest in a new train system and indoor sports complex.

"The new Palais des Sports will be in use for 50 years," says Robert Hermann, a Strasbourg city councillor. "The World Cup is just for a month." It is ironic that the home of the European Parliament will not be part of the World Cup.

Faced with the task of cramming 64 games into 33 days, French World Cup officials nevertheless seem determined to keep teams and supporters on the road in the summer of 1998. Rather than making teams play at one or two first-round venues, it has been decided that in the opening phase all teams will appear at three different sites, a move designed to give all host cities an equal share of the World Cup cake.

"Travelling from venue to venue should not pose any great difficulties to players and fans," says Fernand Sastre, a France 98 administrator. "Between one game and the next there will be time for players to recuperate, and no venue is more than a one-hour flight or a four-hour train journey from another. All our World Cup cities are served by our TGV express rail network."

Security? Following the Atlanta bombing, Michel Platini promises no effort will be spared in the fight against terrorism, while any hooligan contemplating mayhem on French soil should think again. The country's CRS riot squad is not known for its subtlety of response. *Maffezzoli* was warned: it is a feast of football the French are after.

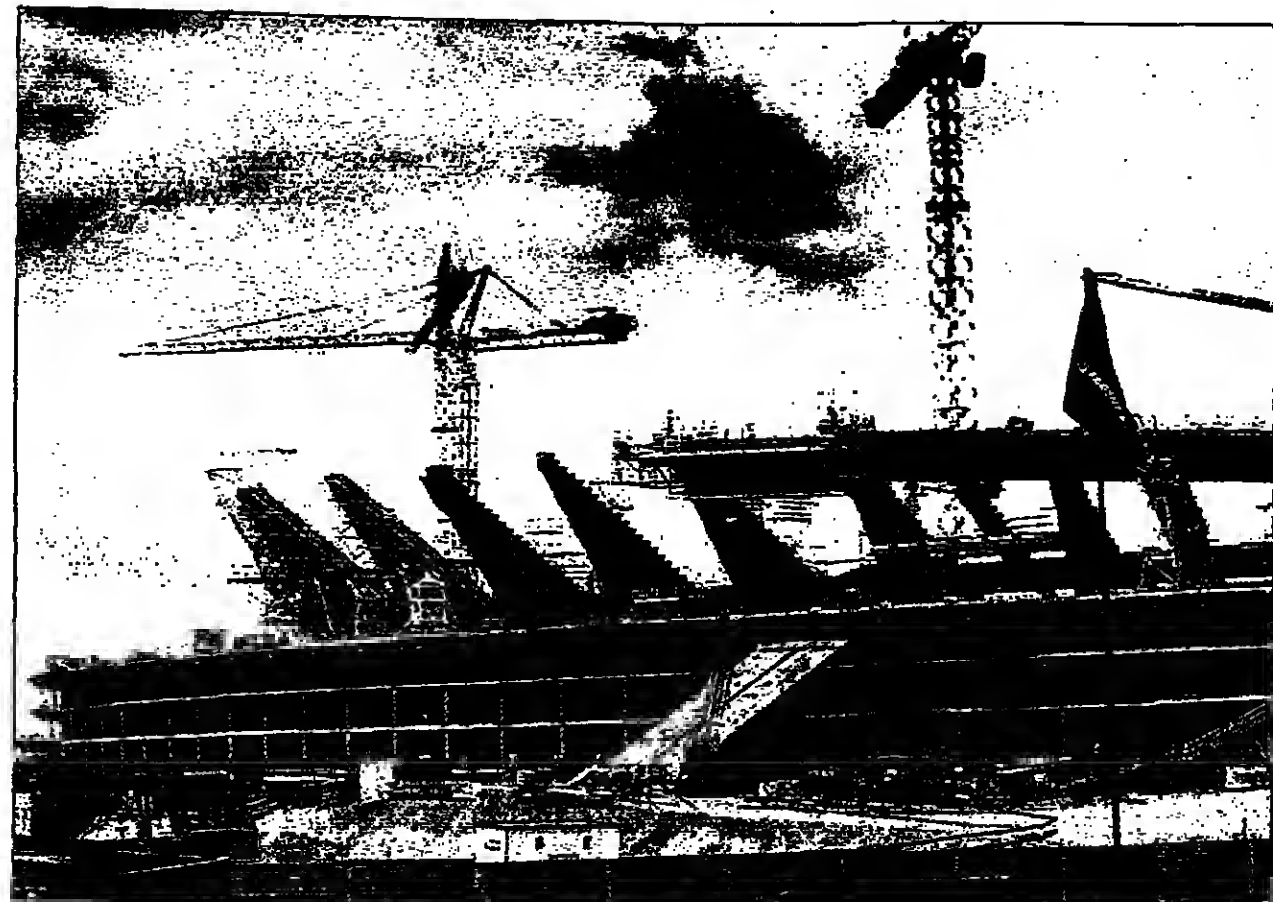


'Our stadium will be surrounded by our French culture, the architectural and natural beauty of our country and our good food'


try and our good food. All this, I believe, will create a wonderful atmosphere at the event.

"Our stadium are not nearly as big as those which were used at USA 94. We will have space for about 500,000 spectators, less than the Americans. But smaller grounds will make things more intimate. Of course, I would like France 98 to make a profit. But I will not cry if we break even as long as I have the satisfaction of doing something positive for France, the 2.5 million spectators who come to the games and football in general."

For those who like to watch their football against a variety of landscapes, France 98 is the place to be. With the hills of Provence near Marseille's Stade Velodrome, the handsome 'Vile Rose' of Toulouse and its



New age dawn: The Stade de France at Paris St-Denis. Photograph: Rémy Michelin/Agence Vandystadt

1998 WORLD CUP FINALS CALENDAR		For the first phase of 48 matches from 10 to 26 June, the 32 teams will be divided into eight pools of four teams. Each team will play against the other three teams in its pool, playing each match in a different stadium to allow greater fairness. In the calendar below, the pools have been labelled A-H; the teams, which have not yet been determined, are numbered 1-4.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
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EUROPEAN QUALIFYING

qualify as hosts, Brazil as champions

Romania, Republic of Ireland, Lithuania, Iceland, Macedonia, Liechtenstein

Mick McCarthy's revamped Republic of Ireland could not have hoped for a softer group. A third successive World Cup qualification is there for the taking. Only an ageing Romanian team, bruised by European Championship failure, realistically stand in Ireland's way.

With Lithuania, Macedonia, Iceland and Liechtenstein making up the numbers, it seems inconceivable that even a modest Ireland side can fail to make the top two. The continuing support from the Irish fans will be important. Four unglamorous fixtures are scheduled at Lansdowne Road before the arrival of Romania for the final qualifier in October next year. Will the old rugby ground be filled to the rafters, as it was in the Charlton years? Or has the fascination gone?

Romania, too, can count their lucky stars that the draw has been so kind. Beaten in all three matches at Euro 96, they were a pale shadow of the exciting USA 94 team. And yet most of the players were the same. It's just that they were two years longer in the tooth. George Hagi, now with 100 caps to his name, might squeeze in one more major tournament, but he desperately needs younger support around him.

Forecast: 1 Romania, 2 Republic of Ireland

Fixtures: Macedonia v Liechtenstein 3-0 1 June; Ireland v Macedonia 1-1 11 June; Liechtenstein v Rep of Ireland 1-0 18 June; Romania v Lithuania 1-0 25 June; Lithuania v Romania 1-0 3 July; Rep of Ireland v Macedonia 1-0 10 July; Macedonia v Rep of Ireland 1-0 17 July; Romania v Lithuania 1-0 24 July; Lithuania v Romania 1-0 31 July; Rep of Ireland v Macedonia 1-0 7 Aug; Macedonia v Rep of Ireland 1-0 14 Aug; Romania v Lithuania 1-0 21 Aug; Lithuania v Romania 1-0 28 Aug; Rep of Ireland v Macedonia 1-0 4 Sept; Macedonia v Rep of Ireland 1-0 11 Sept; Romania v Lithuania 1-0 18 Sept; Lithuania v Romania 1-0 25 Sept; Rep of Ireland v Macedonia 1-0 2 Oct; Macedonia v Rep of Ireland 1-0 9 Oct; Romania v Lithuania 1-0 16 Oct; Lithuania v Romania 1-0 23 Oct; Rep of Ireland v Macedonia 1-0 30 Oct; Macedonia v Rep of Ireland 1-0 6 Nov; Romania v Lithuania 1-0 13 Nov; Lithuania v Romania 1-0 20 Nov; Rep of Ireland v Macedonia 1-0 27 Nov; Macedonia v Rep of Ireland 1-0 4 Dec; Romania v Lithuania 1-0 11 Dec; 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Romania v Lithuania 1-0 18 May; Lithuania v Romania 1-0 25 May; Rep of Ireland v Macedonia 1-0 1 June; Macedonia v Rep of Ireland 1-0 8 June; Romania v Lithuania 1-0 15 June

Quinn gains the whip hand in late run for recognition

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26



Quinn: ttdv and determined -

MEMORIAL HANDICAP (CLASS E)
Entry Value £3,179

Barnard 97.....	7 Queen 10 8
Doughty J Foller 8 8.....	6 Sanders 12 8
F Harris 8 3.....	5 Lind 4
G Pelling 8 13.....	M Henry (S) 5
Hay 8 13.....	Dunn O'Hall 2
I R.....	J F Eden 8

Stinko J Alhurst 8 7 (Ted) _____ D Briggs 8 8
 Moore 8 6 _____ S Whitworth 2
 Jarvis 8 3 _____ J Quinn 8
 10 _____ Declan O'Shea 1
 Sub T J Naughton 7 10 _____ M Baird (5) 7
 Award - _____
 Debt 7st 5lb, Masters Dinner 7st 1lb.
 1 into Debt, Newlands Corner, 7-1 Tymore, 8-1
 n) 5 run

April and is back to the same handicap mark. That is so the fact that she comes back from a lay-off of the good climber Matt Harvey. Newfoundland Corner is the first of those wins, at Canfield 23 days ago. She at Salsbury test time and had three lengths in hand. Following has been running well to be given a chance. He preceded that with a third of 15 to Anterior in Windsor. Petty Salsbury is threatening to win time when third to Salsbury over Leicester's five far-

TON HANDICAP (CLASS D)-£5,100
Value £3,895

1	J White 3920	_____	J Quinn 4 B
2	Miss G Kellaway 580	_____	Dame O'Brien 2 V
3	Wickets & O'Toole 485	_____	S Whitmore 7
4	Maj G Chapman 484	_____	J Quinn 3 B
5	Core 781	_____	Candy Morda 5
6	Thelma 5 Kells 4722	_____	S Sanders 2

Editor 47 10 _____ R. Miller, (7) 8
ured -
For Lad Or Sil.
s, 9-2 Sharp Pearl, 5-1 Another Butchworth, 6-1
in
UNION
time when second of 10 to Goss Swain in a five-
a break since June. Whether the form flatters her
but she can well afford to test season, includ-

Doncaster milker, BOWCLIFFE GRANGE is a real dog after several good runs this season, including his winning run off such a low mark that he has absence since his fifth of eight to Ajax at Woburn's busy home and this handicap is not greatly corrected on 10lb better terms than at Windsor last month.

Selection: BOWCLIFFE GRANGE

...round guilty of irresponsible riding. The committee will consider an appeal if the Yarmouth stewards to find him guilty.

...up, ridden by Paul Carberry, finished second in the Grand Steeple Chase Des Fleurs. In the main supporting race, the Prix de la Ville de Yarmouth, the Charlie Mann-trained Celtic won.

REFORD & WORCESTER HURDLE
£3,000 added 3Y0 2m

1	WHEN (13) M Benstead 11 3	D Gallagher
2	WHT O Branch Darts 10 10	S McNeill
3	UNSEER C Egryce 10 10	E Osborne
4	DOWN W Turner 10 10	S Donnelly

...N 10 5 W Minnesota
 ...FAMH J Jokers 10 10 G Bradley
 ...R Mes P Sly 10 5 R Morley
 ...R STAR A Smith 10 5 F Jounet
 ...SS (11) F Jordan 10 5 S Wynne
 - 3-4 dead -
 - 3-4 Indian Sunset, 8-1 Bath Knight, Shonah
 - 10, 12-1 Remembrance Star, 14-1 others

MASS E, \$3,000 added 2m 4f
 (13) P Hobbs 5 12 0.....D J Kawneer
 (23) (58) (203) T Wall 4 11 0.....R Hume
 (3) (4) F Jordan 11 10 7.....J Aspell
 (142) J B Moore 7 10 8.....J Mingo
 (2) J Jensen 5 10 3.....N T Egan (5)
 - S declared -
 1-1 First Check, 7-2 Tap On Tooth, 6-1 Script,

SOMERS NOVICE HANDICAP
(CLASS E) £4,200 added 2m 7f

PRINCESS (147) Mrs M Jones 8 12 0 _____ F Hiley
LARK (146) K Bailey 8 11 13 _____ A Thornton
M (215) 669 P Hobbs 5 10 23 _____ A P McGarry
DING (225) 0 Barndoll 7 10 8 _____ R Dunsheavy
S BOY (135) M Church 8 10 0 _____ Mr L. Jefford 8

- 5 declared -
 e banding weight: Sorcerer's Boy Set 7lb.
 2-4 Glenferr Princess, 3-1 Lucky Dollar, 2-2
 ceer's Boy
WORLD INTERMEDIATE NH FLAT
CLASS H) mares £1,550 added 2m
 AN (7) Mrs J Hawley 5 11 0 _____ T J Murphy
 CLINT (8) E Brown 6 11 0 _____ P Hawley (8)

E (102) S Bradshaw 5 12 0 _____
 _____ Miss S Beckles (7)
 TS SONG (7) 0 Hyde 8 23 0 _____ J Cullery
 (23) 8 Milman 8 12 0 _____ D Salter (5)
 D LADY W Cunningham 5 11 0 _____
 _____ Mr R Thornton (7)
 GENERATION 8 R Milman 5 11 0 _____ Mr F. Jefford
 HERARD Mrs A Noughton 4 10 11 _____
 _____ R Williams (7)

L.W. Turner 4 10 11 _____ J Power (7)
 DN (40) C Brooks 4 10 11 _____ M Berry (7)
 - 10 declared -
 4-1 Kitchener's Song, 7-1 Lucky Mo, 10-1 Har-
 tion, 20-1 Quixote Gerard, 25-1 others

Worcester last weekend went some way to restoring a measure of self-respect for the Classic form, in one of the few inter-generational Pattern races this year in

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FANTASY FOOTBALL

First results and your chance to register

Today we are publishing the first set of results in our Independent Fantasy Football game, supported by Philips Energy Saver Light Bulbs.

Listed below you will find two scores. The Week 2 (Wk 2) column shows all points scored in matches played between Monday 19 - Sunday 25 August inclusive. The Overall (Ov) column shows each player's/manager's points for Week 2, added to his points for Week 1(matches played Saturday 17 - Sunday 18 August only).

A league of the top scoring Independent Fantasy Football managers will be published weekly after the close of the registration period, when all entries have been received. If you have not yet registered or if you want to pick a new team, then it's not too late. See below for details of how to enter and how you could win tickets to the '98 World Cup or qualifying games.

PRIZES

The overall winner at the end of the season will be the entrant who has accrued more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. Win the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. The winner, plus companion, will see all the action of a quarter-final and a semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's World Cup qualifying games at Wembley.

HOW TO ENTER

Using your football knowledge decide your team formation from the following four options:

FORMATION A. 4-4-2

4 Defenders, 4 Midfielders, 2 Strikers

FORMATION B. 4-3-3
1 Defenders 3 Midfield

FORMATION C. 5-3-2

FORMATION C. 5-3-2
5 Defenders, 3 Midfield

FORMATION D. 3-5-2

3 Defenders, 5 Midfield

You are free to enter as many teams as you like.

you are free to enter as many teams as you wish, allowing you to try out more than one tactical formation, but each team must be made as a separate entry via a separate telephone call.

Once you have chosen your formation, select your team of 10 players to fit your chosen option, plus one goalkeeper and one manager from the list below. Players can only play in the positions that they are listed under and the team's total value must not exceed £40 million. Remember to give your team a name.



Use our Team Selection form above right, to make a note of your team's details, then dial our registration hotline to register. Where possible, please try to use a tone telephone, although a traditional pulse telephone can be used if necessary. Make sure you follow the instructions on the phoneline carefully. At the end of your call you will be given your own special PIN number, which you must keep safe. It can be added to your Team Selection form.

HOW TO SCORE

Every time one of your players scores a goal you will be awarded four points. Four points will also be awarded for goalkeepers and defenders whose team have kept a clean sheet during a match. If a player scores the winning goal, i.e. if there is a one-goal difference in the scoreline, the player scoring the final goal for the winning team is awarded one bonus point in addition to the standard four points awarded for that goal. Each successful assist (a pass that, in the opinion of our team of experts, leads

directly to a goal) will give a player three points. The opinion of our experts on this matter is final. Each player selected and starting a game will be awarded one point.

Players lose one point for a yellow card and three for a red card. Own goals, either scored or conceded, do not count for scoring purposes.

The Premiership manager that you choose will be awarded three points if their real-life team win, one point if they draw and no points if they lose.

Results will be published in The Independent every Wednesday for all games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the following Sunday in the Independent on Sunday.

If your player or manager has been injured or transferred out of the Premiership, there will be the chance to update your team in our transfer period, which will be announced soon. Please read the Rules and Conditions carefully before making your call.

Team Selection Form

Name	Code	Value
Goalkeeper		
Defender 1		
Defender 2		
Defender 3		
Defender 4		
Defender 5		
Midfielder 1		
Midfielder 2		
Midfielder 3		
Midfielder 4		
Midfielder 5		
Striker 1		
Striker 2		
Striker 3		
Manager		
PIN No. 	Total £	

Team Name:

POINT SCORES:

4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkeeper/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

Register today, call:

UK 0891-252-244 (tone)

UK 0891-252-234 (pulse)

Republic of Ireland: 1550 131 553

UK calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate and 49p at all other times.
Republic of Ireland calls cost 58p per minute including VAT at all times.
Maximum call length 6.5 minutes.

TEAM MARKET AND SCORES

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE
			Wk2	Ov (£m)				Wk2	Ov (£m)				Wk2	Ov (£m)				Wk2	Ov (£m)
GOALKEEPERS										MIDFIELDERS									
300	Selman	ARS	6	11	359	Hodges	EVE	0	0	686	Clark	NEW	2	2	854	Colymore	LIV	2	6
303	Boschig	AV	0	0	360	Johson	EVE	0	0	687	Warr	NOT	2	3	855	Fowler	LIV	2	7
304	Flowers	BLA	2	3	361	Hinchliffe	EVE	9	9	688	Barn-Williams	NOT	2	3	856	Chrishie	LEI	2	2
305	Kharin	CHE	10	15	362	Kelly	LEE	1	2	689	Stone	NOT	0	1	857	Heskey	LEI	11	12
306	Hitchcock	CHE	0	0	363	Welshell	LEE	1	2	690	Gemmell	NOT	0	1	858	Robins	LEI	0	1
307	Ogrizovic	COV	1	2	364	Dorigo	LEE	0	0	693	Parker	LEI	1	1	859	Cutnana	MU	2	6
308	Filan	COV	0	0	365	Pemberton	LEE	0	0	694	Tyler	LEI	5	6	860	Scholes	MU	0	1
309	Southall	EVE	5	10	366	Walsh	LEE	2	6	695	Izzett	LEI	2	2	863	Cole	MU	0	0
330	Morgan	LEE	1	2	367	Grayson	LEI	2	7	696	Waddle	SW	0	0	864	Tjortoft	MID	0	0
333	James	LIV	10	11	368	Whitlow	LEI	2	7	697	Blinker	SW	4	8	865	Russwell	MID	2	15
335	Poole	LEI	0	0	369	Watts	LEI	2	7	698	Jones	SW	0	0	866	Barnby	MID	2	3
336	Hoult	DER	2	3	370	Babb	LIV	10	11	699	Hyde	SW	1	2	867	Beardsley	NEW	0	1
337	Schmeichel	MU	1	6	371	Wright	LIV	10	10	700	Magilton	SOT	2	3	868	Asprilla	NEW	2	2
338	Walsh	MID	0	0	372	Jones (R)	LIV	0	0	703	Venison	SOT	-2	-1	869	Ferdinand	NEW	2	3
339	Srnalek	NEW	6	6	373	Seales	LIV	0	0	704	Heaney	SOT	6	7	870	Sanders	NOT	2	9
340	Heslop	NEW	0	1	374	Harkness	LIV	0	0	705	Gray	SUN	6	7	873	Roy	NOT	0	0
343	Crawley	NOT	2	7	375	Newells (G)	MU	1	1	874	Campbell	NOT	1	14	874	Roth	SW	5	9
344	Wright	NOT	0	0	376	Neville (P)	MU	2	7	875	Pratt	SW	0	0	875	Bright	SW	0	0
345	Beasant	SOT	2	7	377	Irwin	MU	2	11	876	Thister	SOT	5	5	876	Thister	SOT	5	5
346	Prosser	SW	6	6	378	Ballister	MU	2	7	877	Sperry	SOT	2	3	877	Sperry	SOT	2	3
347	Colton	SUN	6	6	379	Ney	MU	2	7	878	Stanton	SOT	2	2	878	Stanton	SOT	2	2
348	Walker	TOT	6	11	380	Vickers	MID	2	3	879	Dawson	SUN	0	1	879	Dawson	SUN	0	1
349	Mikulasov	WH	2	3	381	Pensop	MID	-3	-2	880	Hughes	WH	6	7	880	Stewart	SUN	1	1
350	Sultkam	WIM	1	2	382	Wyllyne	MID	1	1	881	Mourur	WH	0	0	881	Sheringham	TOT	6	7
DEFENDERS										STRIKERS									
401	Dixon	ARS	6	11	383	Cox	MID	1	5	646	Richardson	COV	0	1	882	Armstrong	TOT	2	11
403	Winterburn	ARS	9	13	384	Albert	NEW	5	5	647	McAllister	COV	5	6	883	Rostenhal	TOT	2	2
404	Bould	ARS	6	10	385	Howey	NEW	6	7	648	Jean	COV	2	3	884	Evie	WIM	5	5
405	Adams	ARS	6	10	386	Fraser	NEW	0	0	649	Simpson	DER	2	2	885	Stanton	WH	1	2
406	Keown	ARS	6	11	387	Barton	NEW	0	0	650	Azizovic	DER	2	2	886	Evie	WIM	5	5
407	Stratton	AV	10	11	388	Beresford	NEW	0	0	651	Van Der Laan	DER	2	2	887	Evie	WIM	1	2
408	Southgate	AV	15	16	389	Cooper	NOT	2	7	652	Ebbrell	EVE	1	2	888	Evie	WIM	1	2
409	McGrath	AV	0	0	390	Chatter	NOT	0	0	653	Kachekakis	EVE	5	6	889	Evie	WIM	1	2
410	Ehigbo	AV	10	12	391	Jerlan	NOT	1	6	654	Parfoshon	EVE	1	2	890	Evie	WIM	1	2
433	Wright	AV	10	11	392	Lyle	NOT	0	0	655	Shant	EVE	2	2	891	Evie	WIM	1	2
434	Tiler	AV	0	0	393	Reaume	NOT	0	0	656	Evie	EVE	2	2	892	Evie	WIM	1	2
435	Berg	BLA	2	3	394	Monkous	SOT	0	0	657	Evie	EVE	2	2	893	Evie	WIM	1	2
436	La Saut	BLA	0	0	395	Dodd	SOT	2	6	658	Evie	EVE	2	2	894	Evie	WIM	1	2
437	Coleman	BLA	2	2	396	Bernal	SOT	-1	4	659	Evie	EVE	2	2	895	Evie	WIM	1	2
438	Heudly	BLA	2	3	397	Chudman	SOT	1	6	660	Evie	EVE	2	2	896	Evie	WIM	1	2
439	Kenna	BLA	2	3	398	Nolan	SW	6	7	661	Evie	EVE	2	2	897	Evie	WIM	1	2
440	Duberry	CHE	0	0	399	Albertson	SW	10	11	662	Evie	EVE	2	2	898	Evie	WIM	1	2
443	Petrescu	CHE	10	15	400	Walker	SW	6	7	663	Evie	EVE	2	2	899	Evie	WIM	1	2
444	Phelan	CHE	0	0	401	Sierlanovic	SW	8	9	664	Evie	EVE	2	2	900	Evie	WIM	1	2
445	Lebeaut	CHE	13	18	402	Melville	SUN	5	10	665	Evie	EVE	2	2	901	Evie	WIM	1	2
446	Sindriar	CHE	0	0	403	Kubicki	SUN	5	10	666	Evie	EVE	2	2	902	Evie	WIM	1	2
447	Minto	CHE	10	10	404	Ball	SUN	6	11	667	Evie	EVE	2	2	903	Evie	WIM	1	2
448	Shah	COV	2	-1	405	Campbell	TOT	5	10	668	Evie	EVE	2	2	904	Evie	WIM	1	2
449	Dabov	COV	2	2	406	Goodwood	TOT	0	0	669	Evie	EVE	2	2	905	Evie	WIM	1	2
450	Burrows	COV	0	-1	407	Austin	TOT	0	0	670	Evie	EVE	2	2	906	Evie	WIM	1	2
453	Simms	DER	4	4	408	Edinburg	TOT	6	10	671	Evie	EVE	2	2	907	Evie	WIM	1	2
454	Powell (C)	DER	2	3	409	Mabson	TOT	0	0	672	Evie	EVE	2	2	908	Evie	WIM	1	2
455	Waxall	DER	0	0	410	Dicks	WH	7	8	673	Evie	EVE	2	2	909	Evie	WIM	1	2
456	Short	EVE	5	10	411	Billie	WH	2	2	674	Evie	EVE	2	2	910	Evie	WIM	1	2
457	Watson	EVE	0	5	412	Rieper	WH	6	7	675	Evie	EVE	2	2	911	Evie	WIM	1	2
					413	Hall	WH	0	0	676	Evie	EVE	2	2	912	Evie	WIM	1	2
					414	Bowen	WH	1	1	677	Evie	EVE	2	2	913	Evie	WIM	1	2
										678	Evie	EVE	2	2	914	Evie	WIM	1	2
										679	Evie	EVE	2	2	915	Evie	WIM	1	2
										680	Evie	EVE	2	2	916	Evie	WIM	1	2
										681	Evie	EVE	2	2	917	Evie	WIM	1	2
										682	Evie	EVE	2	2	918	Evie	WIM	1	2
										683	Evie	EVE	2	2	919	Evie	WIM	1	2
										684	Evie	EVE	2	2	920	Evie	WIM	1	2
										685	Evie	EVE	2	2	921	Evie	WIM	1	2
										686	Evie	EVE	2	2	922	Evie	WIM	1	2
										687	Evie	EVE	2	2	923	Evie	WIM	1	2
										688	Evie	EVE	2	2	924	Evie	WIM	1	2
										689	Evie	EVE	2	2	925	Evie	WIM	1	2
										690	Evie	EVE	2	2	926	Evie	WIM	1	2
										691	Evie	EVE	2	2	927	Evie	WIM	1	2
										692	Evie	EVE	2	2	928	Evie	WIM	1	2
										693	Evie	EVE	2	2	929	Evie	WIM	1	2
										694	Evie	EVE	2	2	930	Evie	WIM	1	2
										695	Evie	EVE	2	2	931	Evie	WIM	1	2
										696	Evie	EVE	2	2	932	Evie	WIM	1	2
										697	Evie	EVE	2	2	933	Evie	WIM	1	2
										698	Evie	EVE	2	2	934	Evie	WIM	1	2
										699	Evie	EVE	2	2	935	Evie	WIM	1	2
										700	Evie	EVE	2	2	936	Evie	WIM	1	2
										701	Evie	EVE	2	2	937	Evie	WIM	1	2
										702	Evie	EVE	2	2	938	Evie	WIM	1	2
										703	Evie	EVE	2	2	939	Evie	WIM	1	2
										704	Evie	EVE	2	2	940	Evie	WIM	1	2
										705	Evie	EVE	2	2	941	Evie	WIM	1	2
										706	Evie	EVE	2	2	942	Evie	WIM	1	2
										707	Evie	EVE	2	2	943	Evie	WIM	1	2
										708	Evie	EVE	2	2	944	Evie	WIM	1	2
										709	Evie	EVE	2	2	945	Evie	WIM	1	2
										710	Evie	EVE	2	2	946	Evie	WIM	1	2
										711	Evie	EVE	2	2	947	Evie	WIM	1	2
										712	Evie	EVE	2	2	948	Evie	WIM	1	2
										713	Evie	EVE	2	2	949	Evie	WIM	1	2
										714	Evie	EVE	2	2	950	Evie	WIM	1	2
										715	Evie	EVE	2	2	951	Evie	WIM	1	2
										716	Evie	EVE	2	2	952	Evie	WIM	1	2
										717	Evie	EVE							

RULES AND CONDITIONS

RULES AND CONDITIONS

1. Only entries made via The Independent Independent or Sunday Fantasy Football official registration phonelines will be valid.
2. For your Fantasy Football team selection you may only use the players published in the official lists printed in The Independent Independent on Sunday.
3. Entries must comprise 11 players and one manager. The players must consist of a goal-keeper plus one of the four team formations listed below. The manager of the team, including manager, may not exceed £40 million.
4. FA Carling Premiership footballers have

been assigned a fiducial transfer value by our experts which represent current ability. There will be no correspondence relating to players or their fiducial value.

5. Independent Fantasy Football results are calculated on all matches in the FA Century Premiership. Points are awarded according to the scoring system described in "How to Score".

6. In the event that a goalkeeper or a defender is substituted, the player substituted and the substitute are both deemed to have played in the match in question. Therefore, if there is a clean

7. The overall price of the 1998 World Cup trip will go to the team whose total score exceeds that of any other team over the whole season. If there is a tie, a simple draw will take place.

8. One pair of tickets to see England play Wembley will be awarded to the manager whose team's points exceed that of any other manager during any month. The scores are: Month 1: 17/08/96 to 22/09/96 23/09/96 to 27/10/96 Month 2: 28/10/96 to 25/11/96 Month 3: 26/11/96 to 22/12/96 Month 4: 23/12/96 to 19/01/97 Month 5: 20/01/97 to 16/02/97

20/01/97 to 23/02/97 Month 7: 34/02/97 to 16/03/97 Month 8: 17/03/97 to 30/04/97. In event of a tie a single draw will take place. 9. Only FA Carling Premiership matches only. If a player is transferred out of the lower League or is unable to play for other reason, that player will not score in this game from that point on until he resumes playing in the Premier League. 10. All points scored during all Premiership matches count towards the fantasy team's total score for the season and the final top 10. No cup or international matches count. 11. Team selections, once made, cannot

altered until such time as a transfer is published in connection with Fantasy's haul. There is no limit to the number of tries any person or household may make for an individual entry. No PIN claim numbers will be issued for each valid team registration. You must keep your PIN claim numbers safe.

12. Closing date for entries is 5pm, 11 November 1996.

13. The competition is open to residents of the UK and Republic of Ireland only. Residents of other countries may enter the prize draw but must be able to provide a written permission from parent or guardian to participate and ask permission from their country's authorities to enter the competition.

14. Inaudible, incomplete, incorrect or otherwise considered obscene will not be accepted. Newspaper Publishing plc is responsible for entries lost or delayed by post. Proof of airtel or telex transmission accepted as proof of entry.

all other times, Republic of Ireland cost 58p per minute including VAT. Entries made by pay phone are approximately double that of a landline. Your call should not last more than 6.5 minutes. Make sure your team is correct before dialling so that you get the minimum duration.

17. Newspaper Publishing plc reserves the right to stop the game at any time at its discretion for any reason under the conditions. The Editor's Decision is final in all matters relating to the game. All correspondence, either by writing or by telephone, will be entered into the

18. You may receive future information from Newspaper Publications approved companies. If you do not wish to receive this please write to: Fantasy Football, One Casino Canary Wharf, London E14 5DE. 19. Should you have any difficulties regarding your team, please call our helpline on 0171 293 2220.

Fromster: Newspaper Publications
Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DE

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CYCLING: Britain's free-wheeler starts his title pursuit at the World Track Championships in Manchester today. Guy Hodgson reports

Is it a Boardman, is it a plane..?

For a man who was discussing Superman positions, Chris Boardman looked in need of an urgent visit to a telephone box. Even drippy Clark Kent remembers to put socks on, and what sportsman comes to a press conference these days wearing a shirt and tie?

The image was incongruous given the talk about the mountains that are about to be attempted, but the conviction behind Boardman's words had the ring of authenticity. If things go to plan at the Manchester Velodrome over the next 10 days, Britain's most celebrated cyclist will have reclaimed two of the sport's great prizes.

This morning he begins his assault on the 4,000 metres pursuit title at the World Track Championships, and next Friday he will try to ride further in one hour than any man has gone before. It is an intimidating agenda but to hear him diminishes the scale.

"I believe the world record will be broken in the pursuit. In fact, I would be more surprised if it wasn't broken than if it was." As for the hour, the blue ribbon cycling equivalent of athletics' four-minute mile, he said he would not be even attempting it if he did not have a margin to work with. "It would be too much of a risk," he said. "There are no second prizes."

It was not the idle bragging that belittles many a sportsman, nor the mock bravado of an athlete constructing his confidence by saying what he wants to hear. Boardman, who turned 28 on Monday, has done the experiments and has reason to believe he can enhance a reputation built on his Olympic gold medal in the pursuit in Barcelona four years ago. There is also the little matter of a new riding position.

This involves stretching out the arms and lying on the handlebars so that the rider, from the waist up, looks like he is fly-

ing. It did not take a quantum leap of imagination to draw parallels with Superman, and when the Italian Andrea Collinelli used the position invented by Boardman's fellow Briton, Graeme Obree, to win the gold at the Atlanta Olympics, the results look super, too.

Certainly they did to Boardman, who returned from the Olympics, tried to take off on a specially modified bike in trials in Manchester, and was flying within an afternoon. "It's a considerable improvement," Boardman, who held the hour record for a year until Obree broke it in 1994, said. "I don't like it. I think it's going towards human-powered vehicle rac-

ing, but if it's within the rules and I consider it to be an advantage, I'll use it."

A new position has coincided with his return to fitness. A slight viral infection hamstrung Boardman in the Tour de France, where he finished 39th, and the effect of the three-week Tour had an effect in Atlanta, where he could claim only bronze in the time trial. At Manchester, however, he has uncovered his form.

Even without the Superman position, Boardman was doing enough to suggest he would outstrip the hour record of 55.295 kilometres, set by Switzerland's Tony Rominger in November 1994 at Bordeaux, the scene of the Merseyside's own record.

The advantage of taking it lying down has pushed back the limits now and the 56km mark is within reach.

"I won't be drawn into figures," Boardman said, "because I then have to live up to it. Everyone will be waiting. Expecting. All I'll say is that 56 kilometres is possible. If I thought I could only do 55.35 or 55.4, I wouldn't do it. If you're talking about breaking a record by 50 metres, it would be so close it would be unpleasant to try. The mental pressure would be enormous."

The whole record is a question of mind. The last time he broke it, the sheer enormity of what he was undertaking paralysed Boardman. "Starting is very difficult," he admitted. "There's no fixed time, someone just tells you to go when you're ready. I remember sitting at Bordeaux thinking, 'You've got to go, you've got to go'."

"It's all ahead of you. The unknown. Can I do it? You don't get many people who do the thing in training. You do portions of it - 20 kilometres, half an hour - but you don't do it all. To have the whole thing in front of you is enormous."

Boardman's first attempt will be on 6 September, but the following day has also been set aside in case of mishap, as well as the following weekend.

"I want to do it as soon as possible. There's always a chance I might want to return to it, but I'm in good form now and want to get it over with," he said.

First, however, there is the World Track Championships and the title he won in 1994. Then Boardman indicated he would probably turn his back on the pursuit, but the pull of an event so close to home has proved irresistible. "It's an hour from where I live. And that's unlikely to happen again in my cycling career. It will be a very special occasion for me." If it all goes to plan, it will be special for more than him.



Have wheels, will travel: Chris Boardman is focused on reclaiming glory at the Manchester Velodrome

Photograph: Allsport

Absent Obree leaves mark on rivals

The cult of the flat-out racing style is growing. Although its guru, Graeme Obree, will not be defending his world 4,000 metres pursuit title in Manchester today, his presence will be everywhere in the 19m velodrome. Britain's temple of track racing.

From the United States to New Zealand, the word has spread. The Italians, usually cycling's innovators, became the followers when Obree beat their best, Andrea Collinelli, to win a second world crown last year in Bogota.

A weakened Obree failed in Atlanta, but Collinelli won the Olympic gold medal and set a world record. Antonella Bellutti produced a second gold medal for Italy using the

style that Obree likens to Superman, arms outstretched, in flight.

Devotees of the style now include Chris Boardman who, according to the British national coach, Doug Dailey, was touching world record pace while working out with the position on the 250m wooden track.

The prospect of Obree, the world 4,000m pursuit champion, taking on Boardman, the 1994 champion, filled the 3,300-seat stadium on the second day of the championships, when the pursuit final takes place.

Then Obree, who is working his way back after suffering a viral infection, withdrew on medical advice, leaving Boardman to carry the flag against

Robin Nicholl on how one man has changed the shape of track racing

Collinelli and the Frenchman Philippe Ermenault.

Meanwhile, Obree gained another convert in Lee Verdonken. The New Zealander had broken two bicycles while racing in the United States and feared that his trip to the World Championships would be wasted. Then Obree offered to loan him the original world-heating bike he calls "Old Faithful", and Verdonken was back on track with personal bests in training.

France's Olympic medallists,

Ermenault and Marion Clignet, and the American, Janie Quigley have been won over by the position Obree devised after the world governing body, the Union Cycliste International, outlawed his downhill skier position as "dangerous".

The word on the track is that the new position is "really fast". With all eight Olympic champions competing, ticket sales have gained momentum, with two more days almost sold out.

The first day offers three finals, and each of the five days has at least one final. It is the most important meeting since the track opened almost two years ago, and the event has 27 nations competing for 12 titles. Shane Kelly, of Australia, defends his kilometre time trial

title on the opening night, anxious to wipe out the miserable memory of Atlanta, when he fluffed his start and lost a golden opportunity.

There are also two medal fights not for the faint-hearted. The former world champion Michael Hübner, of Germany, seeks to re-establish himself after losing ground to the Australian Gary Niewand and the American Marty Nothstein in the keirin, an aggressive race which has a huge betting following in Japan.

The madison team race, named after Madison Square Garden where it was popular in the 1920s, has the Italians Marco Villa and Silvio Martinello chasing a second world crown to go with their Olympic title.

World Championships Timetable

Today	1900: Men's individual pursuit final	1930: Men's sprint quarter-finals, decider
0900: Men's individual pursuit first round	1935: Women's sprint quarter-finals, decider	1935: Men's sprint quarter-finals, decider
1000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, first round	1940: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1940: Men's sprint quarter-finals, first round
1000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, second round	1945: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1945: Men's sprint quarter-finals, second round
1100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, third round	1950: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1950: Men's sprint quarter-finals, third round
1100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fourth round	1955: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1955: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fourth round
1200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifth round	1960: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1960: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifth round
1200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixth round	1965: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1965: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixth round
1300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventh round	1970: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1970: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventh round
1300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighth round	1975: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1975: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighth round
1400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninth round	1980: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1980: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninth round
1400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, tenth round	1985: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1985: Men's sprint quarter-finals, tenth round
1500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eleventh round	1990: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1990: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eleventh round
1500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twelfth round	1995: Women's sprint 500m time trial	1995: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twelfth round
1600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirteenth round	2000: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirteenth round
1600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fourteenth round	2005: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2005: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fourteenth round
1700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifteenth round	2010: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2010: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifteenth round
1700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixteenth round	2015: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2015: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixteenth round
1800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventeenth round	2020: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2020: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventeenth round
1800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighteenth round	2025: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2025: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighteenth round
1900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, nineteenth round	2030: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2030: Men's sprint quarter-finals, nineteenth round
1900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twentieth round	2035: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2035: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twentieth round
2000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-first round	2040: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2040: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-first round
2000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-second round	2045: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2045: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-second round
2100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-third round	2050: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2050: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-third round
2100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-fourth round	2055: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2055: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-fourth round
2200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-fifth round	2060: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2060: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-fifth round
2200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-sixth round	2065: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2065: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-sixth round
2300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-seventh round	2070: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2070: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-seventh round
2300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-eighth round	2075: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2075: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-eighth round
2400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-ninth round	2080: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2080: Men's sprint quarter-finals, twenty-ninth round
2400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirtieth round	2085: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2085: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirtieth round
2500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-first round	2090: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2090: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-first round
2500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-second round	2095: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2095: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-second round
2600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-third round	2100: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-third round
2600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-fourth round	2105: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2105: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-fourth round
2700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-fifth round	2110: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2110: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-fifth round
2700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-sixth round	2115: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2115: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-sixth round
2800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-seventh round	2120: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2120: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-seventh round
2800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-eighth round	2125: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2125: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-eighth round
2900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-ninth round	2130: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2130: Men's sprint quarter-finals, thirty-ninth round
2900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fortieth round	2135: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2135: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fortieth round
3000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-first round	2140: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2140: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-first round
3000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-second round	2145: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2145: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-second round
3100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-third round	2150: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2150: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-third round
3100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-fourth round	2155: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2155: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-fourth round
3200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-fifth round	2160: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2160: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-fifth round
3200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-sixth round	2165: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2165: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-sixth round
3300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-seventh round	2170: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2170: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-seventh round
3300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-eighth round	2175: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2175: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-eighth round
3400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-ninth round	2180: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2180: Men's sprint quarter-finals, forty-ninth round
3400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fiftieth round	2185: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2185: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fiftieth round
3500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-first round	2190: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2190: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-first round
3500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-second round	2195: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2195: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-second round
3600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-third round	2200: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-third round
3600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-fourth round	2205: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2205: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-fourth round
3700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-fifth round	2210: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2210: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-fifth round
3700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-sixth round	2215: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2215: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-sixth round
3800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-seventh round	2220: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2220: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-seventh round
3800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-eighth round	2225: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2225: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-eighth round
3900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-ninth round	2230: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2230: Men's sprint quarter-finals, fifty-ninth round
3900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixtieth round	2235: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2235: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixtieth round
4000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-first round	2240: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2240: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-first round
4000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-second round	2245: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2245: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-second round
4100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-third round	2250: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2250: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-third round
4100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-fourth round	2255: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2255: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-fourth round
4200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-fifth round	2260: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2260: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-fifth round
4200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-sixth round	2265: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2265: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-sixth round
4300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-seventh round	2270: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2270: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-seventh round
4300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-eighth round	2275: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2275: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-eighth round
4400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-ninth round	2280: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2280: Men's sprint quarter-finals, sixty-ninth round
4400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventieth round	2285: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2285: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventieth round
4500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-first round	2290: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2290: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-first round
4500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-second round	2295: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2295: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-second round
4600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-third round	2300: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-third round
4600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-fourth round	2305: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2305: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-fourth round
4700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-fifth round	2310: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2310: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-fifth round
4700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-sixth round	2315: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2315: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-sixth round
4800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-seventh round	2320: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2320: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-seventh round
4800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-eighth round	2325: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2325: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-eighth round
4900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-ninth round	2330: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2330: Men's sprint quarter-finals, seventy-ninth round
4900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eightieth round	2335: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2335: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eightieth round
5000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-first round	2340: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2340: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-first round
5000: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-second round	2345: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2345: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-second round
5100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-third round	2350: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2350: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-third round
5100: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-fourth round	2355: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2355: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-fourth round
5200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-fifth round	2360: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2360: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-fifth round
5200: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-sixth round	2365: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2365: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-sixth round
5300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-seventh round	2370: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2370: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-seventh round
5300: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-eighth round	2375: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2375: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-eighth round
5400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-ninth round	2380: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2380: Men's sprint quarter-finals, eighty-ninth round
5400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninetieth round	2385: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2385: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninetieth round
5500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-first round	2390: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2390: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-first round
5500: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-second round	2395: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2395: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-second round
5600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-third round	2400: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2400: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-third round
5600: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-fourth round	2405: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2405: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-fourth round
5700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-fifth round	2410: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2410: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-fifth round
5700: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-sixth round	2415: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2415: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-sixth round
5800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-seventh round	2420: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2420: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-seventh round
5800: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-eighth round	2425: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2425: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-eighth round
5900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-ninth round	2430: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2430: Men's sprint quarter-finals, ninety-ninth round
5900: Men's sprint quarter-finals, one hundredth round	2435: Women's sprint 500m time trial	2435: Men's sprint quarter-finals, one hundredth round

Saints' success cannot disguise a multitude of sins

The first season of Super League is all over but the afterthought of the Premiership play-offs. How it has been depends almost entirely on where you look.

Keep the blinkers on and concentrate on what has happened on the field of play and the situation does not look bad.

Despite the misgivings of traditionalists about changes to the rhythm of a game which has, after all, been in a state of flux since 1895, there have been as many compelling games as ever and even more pace and athleticism on show.

That is not, for all the Super League propaganda, because they have moved the game to the summer and given it a new name, but it does have a lot to do with playing once a week. If there is one element of the revolution that must be preserved, whatever the future holds, that is it.

For the Super League script-writers, the season has worked out almost too well. Paris have survived, London have made the top four and, best of all, there has been a changing of the guard at the top, with St Helens displacing Wigan and completing the illusion of a fresh start.

It could hardly have been stage-managed better.

Saints deserve immense credit. Under Shaun McRae they have added patience and consistency to their traditional flair. But, in their hearts, they know that Wigan have been hauled back to the pack as much by their financial crises as by St Helens. In any other season, Wigan would have reacted to their lack of depth by buying rather than hiving off their players to all and sundry, league and union. This time they were denied that option and their oldest rivals have cashed in.

Part of Wigan's problem is their falling gates, and the level of attendance this season has been the subject of even more debate than the standard of play. This is where a broader focus than on the rectangle of grass presents a more disturbing picture.

When it comes to announced crowds, this season has been a novel experience. After decades of thinking "there seems more here than that," I have spent this year thinking precisely the opposite. Some clubs seem to have given the attendance that comes into their heads, or what they think the market will stand. Some have had

Dave Hadfield looks back at the first season of the Super League, which produced plenty to cheer on the field but a lot to worry about off the pitch, where the outlook for many rugby league clubs is bleak

people laughing out loud. Figures have not so much been massaged as taken into the back room of the parlour for all the extras.

Even taking the "official" figures as gospel, most clubs still show a decrease from the last full-scale winter season in 1994-5, with only St Helens, Bradford Bulls and the increases from a base of nil or close to nil recorded by Paris and London going significantly against the tide.

It is equally wrong to claim, as some clubs are doing, that a previously healthy situation has been

ruined by summer rugby. But if the justification for the switch was, as we were told, that the game was dying in winter, then it is still dying now.

That does not mean it is dead. It was always going to be monumentally difficult to persuade the public to adopt a whole new set of habits. It is one thing to accept the general proposition that watching games in the sun is preferable to doing the same in the sleet; quite another to choose to do so ahead of all the other options available on a summer's day.

Certainly the idea that mum,

dad and the kids would go to Blackpool and come back in time for a 1pm kick-off on a Sunday has proved to be unworkable.

Evening matches have been a flop, except, of course, for Bradford, where the right combination of a successful, attractive team, an energetic marketing strategy and the space in which to stage a match as an event has produced a winning formula.

Attempts to package the game more attractively elsewhere have varied from the mediocre to the atrociously awful. Super League has

been a bonanza for third-rate lookalikes and sky-divers who miss the target.

And then, as ever, there is the bottom line - the financial condition of the game. It is, in a word, dire.

The drip-feed of money from the Murdoch coffers is not rescuing clubs from the curse of balance sheets that do not balance. There are some who will claim that it fails to compensate them for the loss of revenue from season tickets, advertising and match sponsorship that they have suffered this year. And that is without them even making a serious effort to meet the more expensive strictures of the League's "Framing the Future" document, with its standards for facilities and administration to which clubs are supposed to conform.

The bigger clubs' solution to this, which they will probably succeed in voting through at the next meeting of the Rugby League Council on 11 September, is to divide the cake up differently, with Super League clubs getting more of the News Limited money and First and Second Division clubs, assuming those divisions still exist in the same form next season, less.

That will be enough to drive a few

Bramleys and Yorks to the wall. If the cull was to be made on the basis of the scale of financial incompetence, however, it is some far bigger names that deserve to die.

The big guns should beware, though. The contract with News Limited that not all of them have bothered to read specifies that any club, however small, failing to make the start line for next season is sufficient reason for Murdoch to pull out of the deal, reclaiming that season's hand-out, as he goes. Prescott, for instance, has only to threaten to call in the receiver to bring the whole house of cards tumbling down.

There are other aspects of

the leader page

Blair must look to his deputy, not to Clinton

You can't Clintonise British politics, said honest John Prescott in Chicago the other day. Not very polite to his hosts at the Democratic Party Convention; so he quickly added that if Clintonisation meant winning elections, he was all for that.

But that isn't what "Clintonise" means, of course: the question is whether Mr Prescott and colleagues are willing to see Labour become the right-wing populist party that the US President is making the Democrats.

It is a fair bet that few Blairites understand the significance of Clinton's signing the Republicans' welfare reform Bill. Here is a measure which, among other things, takes a great bite out of the heart of the argument advanced in Mrs Clinton's sticky book about protecting children better. More importantly, by returning substantive social policy to the States, it will widen American inequality by miles. It will also win Clinton votes.

Anglo-American comparisons offer all sorts of pitfalls. Most British people think they know the United States, when - thanks to television - they know far more about the organisation of the New York police department than that of the House of Representatives. Cultural differences between the two countries mean that, for example, the "demon eyes" advertisement would be absolutely impossible in an America where Satan's powers are a literal daily relief for millions.

Cosying-up between presidents and prime ministers is a recent and superficial phenomenon. It is difficult to imagine Palmerston tapping his feet while Abe Lincoln played him a selection of pioneer favourites on the harmonium. The famed passion of Ronnie and Maggie led to little of political substance. By contrast, Tony and Bill do have relative youth and a certain political style in common.

So lessons there are. What the President principally has to teach his younger Labour admirer is the art of survival. The past four years are, if nothing else, a tribute to Clinton's resilience. After the great early débâcles, such as the failure of healthcare reform, he has been reborn. Whitewater still hangs heavy; some Republicans still hope that the special prosecutor will be their election saviour. But the lesson here from Clinton has to do with staffing. Get rid of duffers and embarrassments. The quality and experience of the inner circle is increasingly important in our quasi-presidential set-up. The top man vitally needs experience at his elbow; a crux role is that of chief of staff, which in British terms means someone an incoming prime minister can carry with him into Number 10 with the savvy to manage not only the official machine and the party, but also the prime minister's weaknesses.

What Clinton has done since the Democrats' staggering losses in the



ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
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congressional elections two years ago amounts to resurrection. He has been helped, to be sure, by Republican overreach. Newt Gingrich, Republican Speaker, simply failed to deliver his radical anti-statist "contract with America". Clinton has opportunistically preyed on the fears of pensioners and other groups liable to vote Republican but which succumbed to the test of state support with Democratic vigour.

Clinton's course has been unmistakably rightward, as measured by reduced social commitments and the promise of fiscal responsibility - the word "social" does not in the US

encompass crime and punishment, including the latest moves to criminalise aspects of tobacco sale and consumption. He had to live with a Republican House and Senate, to be sure, but the cleverness of Clinton has been to dress up his repositioning in the clothes of family and children, which gives him a rhetorical lock on the future, despite the substantial reduction in child support in the latest welfare reform.

Analogies with Blair and Labour are limited by history. Labour has always been a statist party. Prior to the New Deal, the Democrats were the party of strictly limited and local government.

President Clinton, moreover, has ways of appealing to outcasts from the latter-day Democratic Party. He comes from a southern state and, while sincere and courageous in his support for gun control, will probably during the election do some stunt reminiscent of his rushing back to Arkansas during the 1992 campaign to oversee the despatch of a condemned man. Tony Blair seems unlikely to win the British election by brandishing a length of hemp.

So, Bill Clinton arrives in Chicago today bearing - by implication - two thoughts for Blair's consideration. One is about ruthlessness - which cuts staff and policy commitments when they fail, regardless of loyalties or history. It is a lesson that Blair needs to learn.

The second lesson is that the attempt - accepted as readily on the left as the right in Britain a decade ago - to define political identity in terms of attitudes towards the state and its powers is over. No useful purpose is served by trying to make consistent the essential incoherence of government here as well as there over the limits of state intervention - the Tories have indeed brilliantly succeeded in their confusion. Clinton reinforces this message. On the powers of government, he is supremely eclectic. His measures on tobacco, brutally interventionist as they are, will win party plaudits and electoral approval. They are Big Government in action. Meanwhile, he wows Wall Street with a

tax-cutting plan shamelessly devised to upstage the Republicans. This is Lean and Limited Government. All in all, this is not liberalism or collectivism; it is populism. The formula may work for the President this autumn. It cannot, however, be an option for Tony Blair. He should listen to his deputy's account of Chicago. You can't Clintonise British politics and Labour should not even try.

Pop goes our export revival?

There is a common, cheerful view of Britain's economic future which goes like this: once we were good at making things and exporting them. Then we slipped down the exporters' league table. But now we are brilliant at services - including pop - and are becoming a successful nation of exporters in a new way.

One of our biggest new exports in this sense is Liam Gallagher of the world-bestriding group Oasis. And what does he do? He turns away from the plane at the last minute before their US tour and says some very uncomplimentary things about Americans. But a pop group without the main man sounds uncomfortably like the old jokes about British cars. Late delivery and insulting the customer? A reviving export economy, even for pop, can't be built like that.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Prison terms fairer with the old system

Sir: As you pointed out in your leading article ("No more freedom for the Prison Service", 26 August) the latest difficulty faced by the Prison Service yet again illustrates the long-running and fundamental problem about who is ultimately accountable to Parliament and the public for the management of prisons.

It is wise to postpone blaming the Home Secretary for the immediate problem of whether prisoners have been released too early or too late. There is a case for arguing that the long-established method for calculating release dates was correct.

Section 67 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967 speaks of the "sentence of imprisonment" being reduced by the time spent on remand. It is not clear whether this means the total sentence for all the offences or each individual sentence. However, the system for calculating the length of any sentence to be served was amended by the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and Section 51 of that Act provides that for the purposes of that Act "consecutive terms... shall be treated as a single term".

The contrary interpretation creates a nonsense and possibly an injustice. Suppose Bill Sykes and Raffles together commit two burglaries and (admittedly less likely) are arrested. Sykes, because of his past record, is remanded in custody while Raffles is granted bail. After six months, both appear at the Old Bailey where they are sentenced to two years for each offence, the sentences to run consecutively.

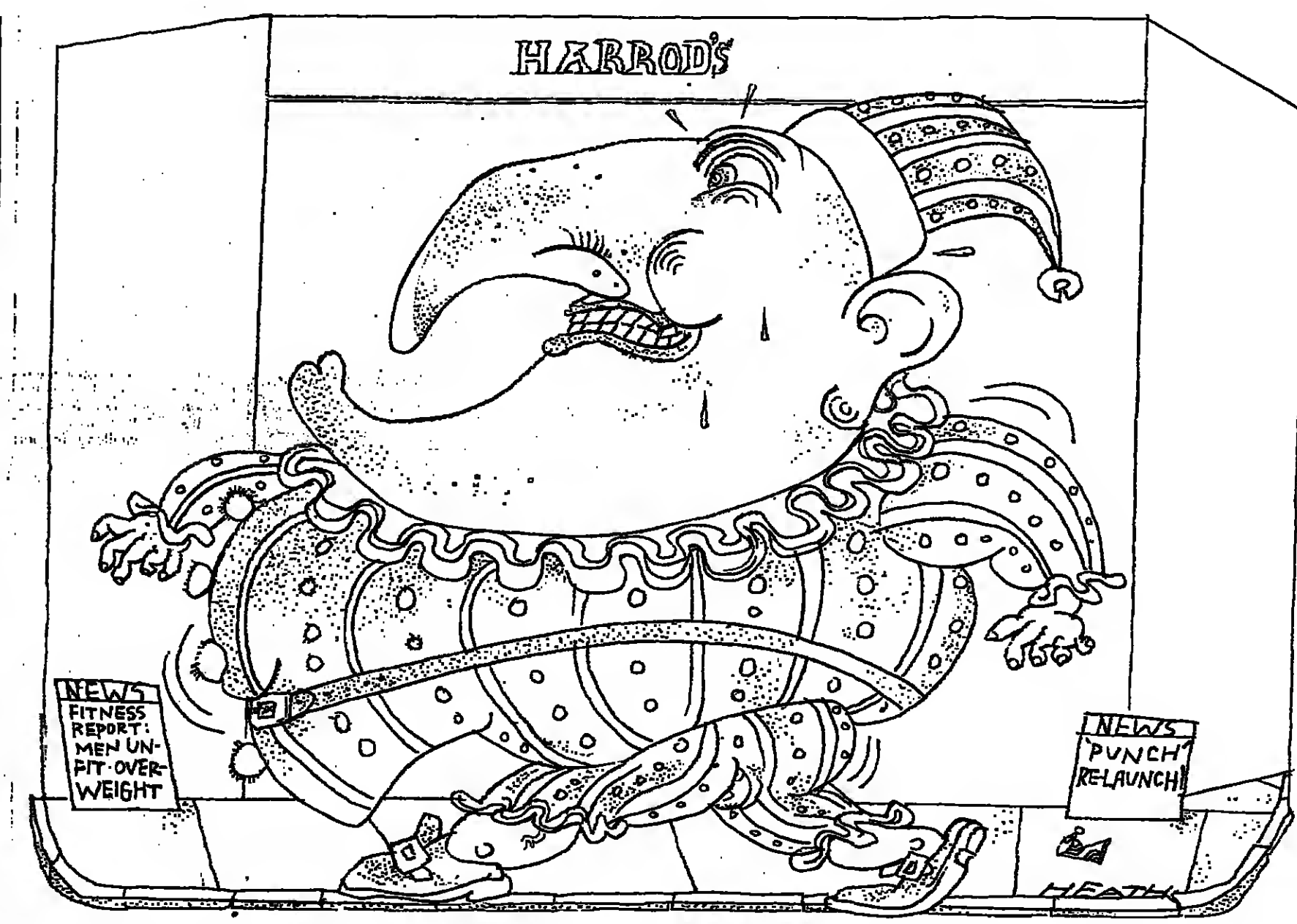
If the Prison Service is correct in its present approach, Sykes will have two periods of 18 months left to serve, making a total period in custody (assuming he does not receive remission) of three and a half years. Raffles, on the other hand, will spend four years in custody. The worse the record, the shorter the period inside.

The Home Office hopes that prisoners will institute legal proceedings to enable the courts to give an authoritative decision. The opportunity could however be taken to seek a judicial review. If both the Prison Service and the Home Secretary were made defendants the High Court could perform a great public service by resolving the fundamental issue: which of the two is responsible? JOHN MITCHELL, Family Law Chambers, Temple, London EC4

Surgery video a breach of trust

Sir: In the light of the video *Everyday Operations* ("NHS blocks sale of graphic surgery video", 26 August), I write as the chairman of the Institute of Medical Illustrators, the professional body for the medical photographers and artists who make clinical recordings, to express my members' deep concern that any hospital could allow the release of confidential records for the production of home-entertainment videos.

Patients place their trust in their medical practitioners and submit to clinical recordings on the understanding that such visual records are useful to the treatment and possibly to the



How to 'unblock' hospital beds

Sir: Lynn Eaton is right to highlight the number of "bed blockers" in East Surrey ("How do I get out of here?", 20 August). At East Surrey we have a significant number of patients who are lodged in our hospitals, sometimes for months, while they wait for a social services funding decision prior to discharge to nursing home care. In the opinion of our consultants, they are unable to benefit further from hospital treatment and as your article points out they are blocking beds needed for emergency admissions of elderly patients via our accident and emergency department. These lodged patients are, in effect, social services' clients.

In response to the Government's recent consultation paper I have proposed a possible solution. That is to allow in law social services to purchase placements from NHS community hospitals and be able to apply the same set of rules as if the clients were being funded for nursing home care.

We believe that by sharing our community hospital overhead costs we could offer social services a 10 per cent discount on the current standard nursing home placement costs. This will enable social services' budgets to stretch further and help support our community hospitals. S R DOWSETT, Chief Executive, East Surrey Healthcare NHS Trust, Redhill, Surrey

The hole story

Sir: There is no mystery about where the holes in Polo mints go to ("Polo not the only mint with the hole", 23 August). As generations of dentists will attest, they reappear as if by magic as holes in the eater's teeth. PETER RUSSELL, Glasgow

Labour rift is just not there

Sir: Anthony Bevin sees the recent publication of candidates' manifestos for election to Labour's NEC as evidence for "an embarrassing display of Labour's continuing left-right divide" ("Labour battle plan reveals internal rift", 26 August). There is nothing at all remarkable about the statements of the six candidates standing on the slate of the Socialist Campaign Group: their views are well known and, whilst I as a Labour Party member will not be voting for them, it would not surprise me if one or two of them are elected, since they do reflect a small but significant minority of opinion within the party.

What is more baffling is Mr Bevin's singling out of comments by Shadow Cabinet members as evidence for an "internal rift". In what sense is Gordon Brown departing from the leadership view by calling for "unifying socialist values" (it was, after all, Tony Blair who introduced the word "socialist" to the party's statement of aims and values)?

What is unusual in Robin Cook's pledge "to help most those whom the Tories have hurt worst" (surely the electorate would expect nothing less from a Labour Government) or in David Blunkett's promise to "eliminate the backlog of repairs and maintenance in our schools" (a promise contained in *The Road to the Manifesto*)? Anthony Bevin's

Labour rift is just not there

analysis depends upon the false premise that new Labour's platform is based upon the abandonment of Labour's socialist values. Nothing could be further from the truth: new Labour is, as John Prescott has said on several occasions, about "traditional [socialist] values in a modern setting". Dr MARK PATTON, Carmarthen

Plain speaking for Cornwall

Sir: Steven Wootton ("Celtic revival makes itself heard far and wide", 26 August) refers to the "Celtic dialect, Kernow". The term "Celtic" has historically been used as an imprecise catch-all that vaguely applies to that which is European, non-English and "other". Kernow is in fact the name for the geographic region the English call "Cornwall", which means "land of Cornish foreigners" in Old English. There are in fact at least three different revived "Cornish" languages including Unified-Cornish, Phenomic-Cornish and Traditional-Cornish. Cornish is better referred to as "Karnowek", "Kernowek" or "Curnoak". But if you're writing in English, why not just say "Cornish"? NIGEL AYERS, Lostwithiel, Cornwall

TV licence we can do without

Sir: In my idealistic youth when I thought that the BBC was slightly better than sliced bread, I remember contributing to a fund to fight the introduction of independent television. Forty years on I find that I rarely look at television, and then mostly at the late evening ITN news. Once or twice a year I may watch a *Panorama* programme if it is dealing with a subject that interests me or for which I have been interviewed - in either case I am not over-impressed by their journalistic standards.

There must be many people who only use their television sets to watch videos or television programmes other than those produced by the BBC. They, like me, must be irritated by having to pay for television licences. Rather than increasing the licence fee ("Birt sounds alarm bells over future of the BBC", 24 August) we would like to see it abolished and the introduction of advertising on the BBC or of "pay as you view". J A DENNIS, Oxford

Oz-stounding

Sir: I was very impressed to read that Jeremy Warner (*Business comment*, 24 August) has personally tasted no fewer than 114 different brands of Australian beer, and come to the conclusion that they all taste the same. This must be a record, even for a journalist. PATRICIA POOLEY, London EC1

William Morris sadly neglected

Sir: Last week I attended a five-day study course organised by Birmingham University on William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement. I was sadly dismayed on my party's visit to Kelmscott churchyard to see the dilapidation of the great Victorian memorial.

William Morris' request was for simplicity. Philip Webb, his friend, designed a very low slab (with inscription) elevated on a stone at each end, with a bay tree placed at one end. However, with the passing of time the slab is weathered, and there are very large yellow-green moss pockmarks all over it; a rough earth ditch is gullied all around the grave because of visitors walking here; the bay tree has been allowed to grow into a huge, thick bush, which hides the grave from view; part of its base overhangs one end.

There is a notice in the small church that William Morris' burial place is in the churchyard but if the church is closed there is no indication where it is positioned, under trees on the perimeter of the churchyard.

Exploitation of this William Morris centenary year has certainly occurred in connection with commercial sales throughout the summer months. Cannot someone or some organisation come forward and undertake a craft renovation of his simple burial place? DOROTHY BILTCLIFFE, Broadway, Worcestershire

The tale of a trapped mouse

Sir: Mention of the Roach Hotel (*Magazine*, 24 August) reminds me of an incident involving the very similar (and cutely named) Hoy Hoy Trap-a-Roach, a folding contraption with an insecticide-impregnated sticky floor baited with a sachet of chocolate powder.

At a certain NHS hospital in the Midlands, these were routinely laid out in the roach-infested kitchen of the postgraduate centre. One of the female staff was collecting the full traps for disposal one morning when one unusually heavy-seeming trap proved to contain a terrified mouse. Unwilling to kill the creature, another of the ladies carefully cut around it with a pair of scissors and let it go - the sight of it clattering away with four cardboard boots and a very stiff tail will remain with me far ever.

DAVID ROGERS, Queen's Hospital, Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire

Royal betrayal

Sir: As the last dismal chapter in the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales is played out, I am puzzled by an inconsistency in our treatment of adulterous public figures.

As several Tory ministers have discovered to their cost in recent years, we British seem to be very attached to the view that the private betrayal of one's spouse and family indicates that a person cannot be trusted with public office. This isn't a view that is widespread abroad - for example, my Spanish friends find it totally incomprehensible - but it is common to many in this country. So why don't we apply it to members of the Royal Family? SIMON DAY, E-mail: 101573.536@CompuServe.COM

analysis

Howard's prison time-bomb

The fiasco over early releases has thrown a new source of instability into a system already groaning under an inept regime. Change course now, or face an explosion of violence, says Polly Toynbee

One man telephoned the Prisoners Advice Service yesterday full of ecstatic glee, sounding as if he had just won the lottery jackpot. He was serving seven consecutive sentences and he had just calculated that instead of being released in 2005 he should be out next year, if the courts uphold the interpretation of the law that has already sprung 80 surprised and delighted prisoners. "He was in heaven, absolute heaven," said one of the prisoners' rights workers. "How is he going to feel if the courts decide the old interpretation of the law is correct after all? There is going to be an explosion in the prisons."

Everywhere there are dire warnings of an outburst of prison riots, whichever way the courts decide to interpret the 1967 Criminal Justice Act. Prisons have been put on alert. Mark Leech, author of the *Prisoners' Handbook*, published by the Oxford University Press, and a former long-serving prisoner, said he had more than 100 calls yesterday from prisoners hoping for early release and ex-prisoners calculating how much compensation they might be due. "One man was in a next-door cell to one of the 80 suddenly let out last week. It wasn't fair, he said, that some should get out because they just squeezed through the door in time. They are fuming. I'm afraid that this will go off all round the country."

The full scale of the chaos and potential calamity is beginning to hit everyone associated with prisons. How on earth could it have happened that the law was quietly reinterpreted by Home Office lawyers, with no assessment of the effect it would have? The new interpretation allows time on remand to be deducted from each concurrent sentence, not just from one. Some prisoners have been let out early – another 4,000 might follow, and beyond that the number

due compensation is currently entirely impossible to quantify. The top rate for wrongful imprisonment is £95 a day. Anyone in the past six years who served longer than they should have could claim, some for considerable periods of time. Many who suffered any kind of damage while wrongfully imprisoned could make backdated claims over the past 30 years. How many people? No one knows. How many millions or billions of pounds could it cost? Who can tell?

The absurdity of what has happened defies any rational understanding. One prisoner who had served seven years described how it happened to him: he was in the prison workshop when officers came in

and called him back to his cell, told him to pack up his possessions, took him in front of the governor and put him out of the front gate, all within 20 minutes. He thought he had another year to serve. When he arrived in London, the probation service, unprepared, had nowhere to send him and nothing to offer.

Mark Leech describes how hard it is to leave prison after years inside. "The pre-release courses run by the prison probation officers really make a difference. They tell you how to claim benefit. They tell you what has changed out there, help find you a hostel, maybe a job or at least a training course, and the probation officers outside are waiting for you."

On release a prisoner who has been inside for a year or more gets about £92 cash and a travel warrant to anywhere. In normal times, each prisoner gets a tailor-made three-piece suit – the tailor coming in to measure him up, with material

on amid speculation about the sulphurous smoke billowing out from beneath the door. But few expect Tilt to be fired and none, of course, expects Howard to resign.

Who is to blame for all this? On the surface, Tilt's decision

'In some prisons it would only take a spark. I am increasingly afraid. Is this that spark?'

chosen by the prisoner. He gets two pairs of pyjamas, two shirts, a pair of jeans, working boots, shoes, slippers, an overcoat, gym shorts and vest, toiletries and a holdall. The shock of sudden unexpected ejection can be considerable.

The sound of raucous shouting from many within the Prison Service and the Home Office has given way to sheer incredulity at the scale of the incompetence. All lay the blame squarely at Michael Howard's door. Not the particular blame for this particular blunder. But, many say, such a bizarre disaster could only have happened in the climate of fear and confusion over the line of command over which Howard has presided.

Yesterday's meeting between Howard and his director of prisons, Richard Tilt, dragged

to go off on holiday to Italy leaving only an unremarkable memo on the Home Secretary's desk, which completely failed to flag up the operational and political dynamite of the situation, makes him culpable in many eyes.

Tilt has to explain why he resigned only relatively humble Home Office lawyers on a reinterpretation of the law that would have such devastating effects. Why did he not ponder and take senior legal opinion and, above all, why not discuss it with the Home Secretary? How could he think that releasing an unknown number of possibly serious offenders as much as nine years early, without warning or preparation, would mean anything but catastrophic headlines – with perhaps worse consequences? The first crime committed by one of

these 80 released prisoners can be guaranteed a trumpeting in the tabloids.

But Richard Tilt is not a naive outsider like his unfortunate predecessor, Derek Lewis. He is a sober long-serving civil servant with a thorough prison service grounding. What insiders say is that it happened because the command structure in the prison service has been so shot to pieces by Michael Howard that no one knows any longer what buck stops where, if anywhere. They are so dispirited, demoralised and intimidated by petty interference, coupled with sheer irresponsibility by ministers, that they have become fatally disoriented. It does not help that Howard and his prisons minister, Ann Widdecombe, are barely on speaking terms.

No doubt calls for Howard's resignation will be wasted breath. But his law-and-order mantra will have been lethally damaged. He can no longer, for instance, say "prison works" without a lot of sniggering up sleeves. He can no longer with a straight face accuse Labour of planning to release serious offenders.

But what should he do? First of all, the disastrous split between Home Office and Prison Service needs to be abandoned.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, observing all

this, says: "A hell of a lot of chickens are coming home to roost. You can put out to agencies operations such as driving licences or passports, where the line between policy and operation is simple. But with prisons there is a huge area of discretion involved from day to day. Ministers are now divorced from day-to-day management and yet they interfere without understanding the system, the worst of both worlds. The prisons minister should chair a prisons board, listening to day-to-day decision-making but only intervening where it seems necessary."

What else should be done now? It is time for a far-reaching examination of the role of prison. Mr Howard has placed the service under intolerable strain. This extraordinary error is a symptom of a system that is near collapse and no longer knows what it is for.

For months now, as the prison population has soared, there have been warnings that jails are becoming unstable. Education, therapy, drink and drugs programmes and schemes to make criminals confront their crimes have all been savagely cut. Three hundred prison teachers have been sacked. Some prisons have lost 80 per cent of their education programmes. Prisoners are locked away for longer, with

less exercise and fewer television sets, while regimes are tougher and security tighter. "In some prisons it would only take a spark. I am increasingly afraid," one prison governor said the other day. Is this that spark? Raising some prisoners' hopes of release only to dash them again could prove dangerously explosive.

There is a lot of *schadenfreude* around. The collapse of Michael Howard's prison works policy in a blaze of flame would please many. But riots kill and maim, as well as wasting millions of pounds that could be better spent than on rebuilding jails. Wiping the smile off Howard's face would come at too high a price, whatever the satisfaction for those who could say, "I told you so."

The moment we stop to consider money in the criminal justice system, the figures are frightening. Every year we spend £10bn on the whole panoply of prisons, police, courts and probation. What do we get for our money? Eighteen million crimes are committed in England and Wales – but fewer than half are ever reported to the police, and fewer than 5 per cent are officially "cleared up". Only 3 per cent result in the offender being cautioned or convicted.

While every other department is subjected to rigorous value-for-money scrutiny, the criminal justice system seems to be virtually exempt. Mr Howard can boast that he has increased the prison population by 25 per cent, with another 30 per cent increase predicted when his new sentencing policy comes in. Yet every piece of evidence suggests that prison works very little for the vast amount it costs – £2,000 a month per prisoner.

The Home Office's own research department is brimming with figures that show what works best per pound spent – all of it ignored by the present regime. Sir Stephen Lunn has said time and again that many of those in prison can be turned away from crime if only they are given the education and treatment they need. From Britain and the US come plentiful examples of intensive treatment for criminals in the community that work – and cost far less than prison.

It took the murderous Strangeways riot to bring radical reforms last time, with Lord Justice Woolf's powerful indictment of how the prisons were run. It should not require another lethal dose of mayhem and destruction for the policy to be changed again. The Government needs to turn away from a policy that is the despair of all who work in prisons.

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Sell the Fringe? What a ... good idea

I don't know why I never thought of it before. What to do with the Edinburgh Fringe, I mean, this rampaging monster which terrorises central Edinburgh every summer. And the answer was there, under my nose, the whole time. And it wasn't even me who thought of it! It was a bloke I met at the Pleasance that I got chatting to. Somebody near me said, "What are they going to do with the Fringe?" and this fellow said, "Sell it".

Nobody heard him except me. "How do you mean, sell it?" I said.

"Exactly what I said," he said. "Sell it as a going concern."

"You couldn't," I said. "That's ridiculous. There's no way you could buy and sell the Fringe. It's just a heterogeneous bundle of hundreds of little concerns. It's not a thing. It's like a market. It's like a souk."

"Like Covent Garden market used to be?" he said. "Look at that now. Changed out of all recognition. Some-

body must have made a mint. "Yes, but the Fringe is an artistic market. You can't buy and sell an art market!"

"How much do you know about business?" he said.

I hate it when people ask me questions like that. The humiliation is only passing, but it's real enough.

"Nothing much," I admitted. "If you knew anything about business, you would spot instantly that the Edinburgh Fringe is capitalism at its most naked. It's as if hundreds of companies all floated their shares at the same time. They come to Edinburgh, go in hock to get a venue, scabble desperately for audiences in three weeks, and then go home having made a whacking profit, or, most likely, nursing a debt they'll spend the next year paying off."

"Of course, taken as a whole it's a great success story. Wonderful prestige, wonderful image. It's only when you look close that you see the wobbles. The Fringe is short-termism in an extreme form. It's sharks against sharks. It's sink or swim. I tell you, people in the



Miles Kington

City would shudder at the way cut-throat business is conducted on the Fringe."

"No, it's not like that," I said. "It's comedy and plays and ballet and mime and folk song and ..."

"Cobblers," he said. "That's the product, yes, but the methods are something else. The method of the Fringe is all hustling and haggling and hyping and tearing down other people's posters and manufacturing fake publicity and pretending to be sorry when someone else has a small house, but because the veneer is all artsy smarty everyone fails to notice the jungle conditions. Perrier already makes big money out of other

people's efforts. So do comedy companies like Avalon. Imagine the money to be made by actually buying the whole Fringe."

"So you would sell the Fringe, would you?"

"It's not exactly mine to sell. All I am saying is that the Fringe reminds me very strongly of one of those companies that are due for takeover, or for privatisation, or for something like that. It's got a huge turnover and it's got a huge reputation, but large parts of it are unprofitable and it's just crying out for asset-stripping and relocation and ..."

"Relocation?"

"I can think of many cities that would love to have a slice of the action."

"Hold on! You can't move the Fringe!"

"They move the Olympic Games around."

"But Edinburgh is the home of the Fringe!"

"Athens is the home of the Olympic Games. It is not, however, held in Athens. Money speaks too loud for that."

"Edinburgh would never let it go."

"Don't you believe it. There are plenty of people here who would love to see the back of it. The official festival, for one, which hates the success of the Fringe. The inhabitants, for another. Edinburgh becomes impossible every August. Wouldn't they jump at the chance to get their city back for a whole month?"

"Would you buy it?" I said.

"If I had the money. Like a shot."

"Does it need buying?"

"Does an old rambling mansion need restoration? Did British Airways need privatisation? Was water and gas ripe for it?"

"Who are you?" I said curiously.

"Oh, a sort of financial adviser," he said.

"Wouldn't you like to know?" he said, and disappeared towards the bar. He never came back.

I have been thinking about what he said ever since, and as I said, I wish I had thought of it first.

صلى الله عليه وسلم

the commentators

To the world, she's a villain; to me, she's fun

Hillary Clinton has been vilified for five years – so far. Why? Maybe we just can't cope with complex women

Last night Hillary Rodham Clinton made a speech to the Democratic Convention in Chicago, in support of her husband's nomination for the US presidency. Not, as it happens, that he needs support; his nomination is assured; instead, her speech has been described as a "rehabilitation" exercise.

From what does she need rehabilitating? From a five-year campaign of unparalleled vilification: not just from the Republican opposition, but from pundits, journalists and gossip-mongers worldwide. For just about everything.

First, she was a dour intellectual feminist, then she was a manipulative, power-hungry woman driving a charming but weak man towards the White House; then she was a vain woman willing to renounce her self to fit media images (and even pretend she could cook chocolate chip cookies!); then she was a political failure whose health plan was an obvious disaster; then she was a criminal – or at least a sharp operator, called as a witness at seedy financial trials; now, more often, she is sidelined – a neurotic, paranoid nutcase sacking staff and holding seances – at best a liability and at worst a danger.

It's very strange, really. What exactly has

Ms Clinton done that is so awful? She has worked hard, stood by her man, and struggled to find a public image acceptable to both herself and the world, but ...

Tiresomely for her, Hillary Clinton is, perhaps above all, very intelligent: quite simply, mass marketing hates clever women – unless they confine themselves to universes and eccentricities. They are meant to "pay" for being brainy by being both ugly and emotionally unfulfilled.

She is serious – when she speaks or writes about the things she cares about, such as families, she does not attempt to trigger traditionalists' terrors, but to look at what children need to flourish. Her book, *It Takes a Village* (to raise a child), really does try to negotiate a new relationship between community and individuals within a complex society. Instantly, she has made herself a hostage to fortune, once again. Bob Dole, the Republican challenger, has taken up the title, responding "It takes a family to raise a child," adding that her book is really a justification of big-government socialism. But the social condition of children is a serious issue in the United States, and even in the political cauldron of an election year she takes it seriously.

She is effective. The health plan may not



SARA MAITLAND

have been successful, though God knows what healthcare plan would have been, but her education programme in Arkansas and her child advocacy work have been accepted as innovative and practical.

Ms Clinton is not just clever, thoughtful and effective; she is also a feminist, a wife, a political activist, a mother and a career lawyer. The real fact is that we have not yet learnt to deal with complex women. Recent studies have shown that all women politicians get less favourable media coverage than their male counterparts. In some ways it is even harder for Hillary Clinton, because she is not only a political figure but also the wife of a head of state, who must harmonise her views with his agenda.

One of her problems is unquestionably her age. She is too young to be "momma

of the nation" and not young enough to be the sweetheart of the nation, as Princess Diana says she wants to be. The media circus into which she is inevitably thrust would probably be delighted with either stereotype, but it does not seem to be able to cope with anything more subtle. There are quite a number of acceptable roles for women – suffering mother, beautiful queen, virtuous lady, for example – but if you are a woman with high visibility who cannot easily be slotted into any of those niches, you will be villainised; witch, bitch, hysteric, or worse.

There is something personal in this defence: I like Hillary Clinton. She is fun, (something never mentioned, perhaps she can't be any more, which would be sad). I stayed with her once in Arkansas, during the years that the now President was out of office. Despite her hectic schedule, we enjoyed long late-night conversations. I remember one, a mixture of hilarity and real interest, on the relationship of religion to morality and civic life. She dredged out of her address book valuable contacts for my research on Christian feminism in the US, and rang her friends to find more. She was easy to be with, thoughtful, interesting and supportive.

Even if I had never met her, I think I would still be a grateful fan. Women like me need a few more women like her: high-profile women who can manage the juggling trick – careers, children, a partnership, and a truly chic pink suit at the Peking Women's Conference. Women who want to be good and clever.

I hope the Democratic Convention delegates, more than half of whom are women and 40 per cent of whom define themselves as "liberal", recognise how much they, and contemporary women more widely, owe to Hillary Clinton. The risky and obviously painful course she has been made to run has helped us. The media attack on her has shown us how far we still have to go to achieve anything resembling equality in representation. If the convention expresses the real enthusiasm that the Republicans generated for Elizabeth Dole – another career wife, after all – they will be cheering for themselves and their daughters, for some sort of optimism in the possibility of women being allowed some public space without giving up all personal dignity.

And anyway Hillary Clinton has got a hellish few months ahead of her. I wish her good luck.

Coffee and tea, and a lah-tay and me

Ann Treneman discovers capitalism on caffeine

Americans love a good drug but things aren't what they used to be. The Marlboro poster man died of cancer and no one can save nicotine now. Work hours have increased and alcohol appetites decreased. On the West Coast they only drink micro-brews and the only smoke you won't be arrested for is a cigar. But everyone does coffee and we are not talking the lukewarm brown water variety.

America has a new coffee culture but it is one that Jack Kerouac (luminary of the last great caffeinated craze) wouldn't recognise. Something called latte (that's lah-tay) is everywhere. It may sound like a Paul Simon album but is a sort of bastardised, made-in-the-USA cappuccino. The entire country is slurping it in insulated drinking mugs.

Everywhere you look there is a Java drive-thru or a coffee cottage kiosk. Cappuccino is so common that it is actually spelled correctly and if your coffee is getting cold, it's probably a Frappuccino. People really do ask about Yeragache beans (that's Ethiopian to you and me) and whether the froth on that latte can be low fat. All of this because Howard Schwartz went to Italy and had a vision. "It gave me the chills," he told *Spirit* magazine. "I felt the romance of it all. Then I started walking through one coffee bar after another." Suddenly, he saw an America with a coffee bar on every corner. The diner was dead, the tavern too tacky. Americans needed a "third place" – after home and work – to meet and make a community. That place would be his coffee bar.

In 1989, he lost a million; in 1990, more than that. But the next year sales for his company, Starbucks, shot up 84 per cent and the word exponential does not do justice in subsequent growth. In fact, the company, started by three English Lit students – Starbucks was chief mate in *Moby Dick* – with a single Seattle store is now almost too successful. They don't call it Howard's Trend for nothing.

Americans like to refer to the "alpha predator" and, in coffee land, Starbucks is it. Capitalism on caffeine is a little crazy. Starbucks calls itself an "experience" and its staff are "partners" (all 17,000 have stock options). Those behind the counter have to train for 25 hours to become a "barista". It has a coffee cookbook, its *Seven Pillars of Coffee Brewing Wisdom*, a catalogue, a toll-free number and a CD jazz compilation. On Valentine's Day, lovers exchange Starbucks stock.

This summer, the company went international: today Tokyo, tomorrow Singapore. "Just wait until we come to Britain," grinned a barista in Seattle. "We've 900 stores now and the goal is 2,000 by the year 2000." The company says it will be looking at Europe, but it doesn't know when.

It all seems rather addictive. If Marlboro Man were alive, he'd be drinking latte, that's for sure.

Let's give Harold one in the eye

Robert Winder says it is time to put the telling of traditional British history behind us

I haven't been a good week for education. No one seems to know what to make of the booming GCSE results, except to note that the examining boards are handing out more A grades than they used to. And there isn't really a way to make the disappointing results of the new assessment of 11-year-olds (which revealed a shaming rump of almost-teenagers unable to read or add) seem pretty, which is why people are left arguing that the tests were a bad idea in the first place. And now comes a Gallup survey, which purports to prove that young people are illiterate airheads who don't even know "basic" facts such as the date of the Battle of Hastings.

Quite how this "conclusion" was reached is a mystery. As it happens, the poll indicated that 82 per cent of people knew the answer, an impressive figure. If you take out serial murderers, child abusers and juvenile delinquents, all of whom have other things on their minds, it is practically the whole population. But inevitably the findings are provoking a discussion about what exactly we should know as paid-up members of society.

It is a nice irony that the argument should revolve around 1066 and all that. When Sellers and Yeatman constructed their mischievous pastiche of old-fashioned, jingoistic history-teaching they were out to mock. Can it really be that we are now eager to promote the very thing they parodied – the routine inculcation of a dogged set of names and dates, with clear Made-in-Britain tags for the short-sighted?

The story of the nation, the basic operating software of citizenship in the old days, was essentially the story of British pluck. Boadicea, Alfred the Great, King Harold, Drake's Drum, Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington, Winston Churchill and Mrs Thatcher were all redoubtable freedom-fighters refusing to kowtow to barbarous foreign hordes – except for Harold, who took one in the eye from the French, and gave birth to the cult of the

valiant loser. Anyone who objects to this is swiftly presented as unpatriotic. And it is indeed problematic when the consensus about what we need to know breaks down: it means there is no common material for people to chew over.

In former times, it was compulsory to know Latin, Greek and the Bible, an extremely narrow curriculum that somehow managed to give students a skeleton key into Western art, music, literature and political theory. The 20th century has, quite properly, rebelled against the limitations of a small and lordly canon of knowledge and ideas, but at some cost. These days the mass media provide the consensus. America, this summer, has been united by anything it learned in school, but by a triumph over an alien blitzkrieg. (*Independence Day*) and Michael Johnson winning the 200 metres.

But is this the national story we truly wish to tell ourselves these days? Shouldn't these bravehearts be supplanted, or at least supplemented by non-warrior heroes such as Wilberforce, Pankhurst, Stephenson and Baird, the people who gave us the abolition of slavery, women's emancipation, trains and television?

Why, in any case, should we – a mercantile, exploring, seafaring nation that once ruled the waves – even bother to emphasise the domestic aspects of our island story. The trouble is, a serious list of things a modern Brit should bump into at school would swiftly become unwieldy.

It would have to include Stalin, Hitler and the Holocaust, women's liberation, Einstein, the industrial revolution, Shakespeare, Mozart, Homer, Greece 'n' Rome, the rise and rise of sport, the history of television, and the Irish potato famine. And then, after our milk and bun, we'd have to do Luther, Sophocles, the European discovery of America, Freud, the First World War, the history of oil, Darwin and the slave trade. It's a lot to learn, sure – perhaps it could all be inscribed onto our super-duper ID cards, with our score



1996 and all that: an impressive 82 per cent of children actually knew the date of the Battle of Hastings

Bridgeman Art Library

listed at the top of the info-page.

Maybe that's impractical. In truth, it is not even desirable. We need foxes, who know many things and are good at pub quizzes, but we also need hedgehogs, who know only one big thing. What is undoubtedly true – the reason why those test results for 11-year-olds are so dismaying – is that without the so-called three R's – reading, riting and rithmetic – we have access to none of these.

Perhaps the true lesson of history is that it is best forgotten anyway. It might not be a coincidence that the surge of

enthusiasm for traditional history teaching comes at a time of vexed national pride, at a time when we no longer win gold medals. Perhaps it is true what mother always said, that what we don't know can't hurt us. History after all is the nightmare from which we are trying to awaken – maybe it is time to try aversion therapy. It is possible to know the dates of all the key battles and still forget your child's birthday.

The great argument for learning history, however distorted and glancing our view of it, is that we learn from it. What if it is time to revise this notion

altogether? On the radio yesterday morning, Trevor McDonald could be heard smoothly reading CLR James's view from beyond the boundary, to the effect that the ideal education was Greek: sport and poetry with some literary cricketism thrown in. There are not many recorded instances of people learning from the past. Indeed it is possible that the less we know about the past, the less likely we are to repeat it. History, then, is cruel and dismal effect, in Ireland, in Bosnia, in Kashmir. The old yokes are the best ones.

THE CENTRAL FACTS FROM THE COURSES YOU ALWAYS MEANT TO TAKE, IN 25 LECTURES

Opera is primarily an experience of the heart, not the head. Thus a first rule to understanding this seductive, 400-year-old Italian invention is to accept that you will always love more than you know. Even advanced scholars often have a shockingly vague grasp of their subject when it comes to explaining the plot or remembering who sang the title role. For in combining music, words and drama, opera (lit. Italian "work"), deriving from Latin *opus*), has more terms of cultural reference than any other art form. Wagner, the 19th-century German Titan among opera composers, called it a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (unified work of art), of which his four part *Ring of the Nibelung* is a supreme example.

All this matters not a fig if your prime desire is to delight in the human voice at its most thrilling and expressive. If, however, you are serious about learning, you must sacrifice every hour and penny to performances, CDs, scores, texts, books on stagecraft, set design, architecture, history, religion and politics. You should also brush up your Italian, German, Russian, Czech, French, English counts for little, except in Puccini's *Didio* and *Aeneas* (1689) or Britten's *Peter Grimes* (1945), as most operas are now performed in

their original language. Whichever the case, you'll probably only catch the odd syllable anyway, as sung words are notoriously hard to hear. This may be why so few great writers have written librettos (lit. little books), though many composers established important partnerships with their librettists. Mozart and Da Ponte are the finest example.

For most, an encounter with opera usually starts with music by one of the great 19th-century Italian composers, notably Verdi or Puccini. Yet the father of the form was working nearly three centuries earlier. Until his death in 1643, Claudio Monteverdi experimented with opera as far as his job running the music at St Mark's, Venice, allowed. His *La favola d'Orfeo*, which movingly retells the story of Orpheus and Euridice, is the earliest opera still regularly performed today. 1607, the date of *Orfeo*'s first performance at the Gonzaga Court in Mantua, is the only important date in operatic history.

Compared with what was to follow, opera in renaissance Italy was an intimate and formal court entertainment, sung by light-voiced singers with a mere handful of players to accompany them. The great crowd-pulling masterpieces, all blood-red emotion and grand spectacle, only came



WEEK 4 DAY 3

Opera

VISITING LECTURER: Fiona Maddocks

A final examination will be set at the end of term. All graduates will be awarded a diploma and the ten best results will receive a year's subscription to the Independent



about later, in purpose-built opera houses. There, public of all classes came and promenaded, ate, talked, read their librettos and of course illicit liaisons, while still managing to respond to the key dramatic moments as the composer intended. Under the guise of greater audience seriousness, opera-going is much the same today.

After Monteverdi, opera spread rapidly throughout Europe, each new composer pushing for greater dramatic expression. Essential names are Lully, Rameau, Handel and Gluck, culminating in Mozart at the end of the 18th century. For many, Mozart remains the ideal opera composer, with music and emotion held in perfect balance before it all went over the top.

After Mozart, the taste was for more brilliant vocal writing, bigger orchestras and grand crowd scenes: in Italy Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi and Puccini; Bizet and Meyerbeer in France; Musorgsky and Tchaikovsky in Russia; Wagner and Richard Strauss in Germany. Berg, Stravinsky and Britten bring us, for current purposes, more or less up to the present day.

Singers, despite their intrinsic importance to opera, can only be touched on here. From high to low, each singer is categorised according to vocal

range: soprano, contralto, tenor or bass. You will also hear of mezzo-sopranos, Heldentenor (Ger. heroic tenor), baritone, counter-tenor, Coloratura. Those students classified as opera buffs usually make the voice their special subject. Do not embark on this course unless you have a collector's mentality, a memory for names, faces and voice colours, and a taste for the temporal. Concentrate instead on strengthening your knowledge of the works themselves.

With contemporary production, a whole new set of arguments apply. Here you plunge headlong into a melée of hot conviction and cold confusion. You will hear the phrase "producer's [sometimes called director's] opera" tossed about. This refers to the trend dominant in the past 15 years, for an opera performance to be judged first and foremost on its production standards and ingenuity. Hence Zeffirelli's *Tosca*, Richard Jones's *Ring*. As with singers, never forget that it was the composer who wrote the work.

The old-fashioned view remains that of putting the music above all else. On this firm structure can all knowledge of opera be built. Unlike singers, conductors or producers, the music never dies. Tomorrow: Ballet

"Britain is somewhat of a fallen idol"

The Times Correspondent in Bonn, 9th August 1963

"The trouble is we don't believe in anything; we don't believe in communism, or in anti-communism, or in free enterprise."

Anthony Sampson quoting an unnamed Cabinet Minister in *Anatomy of Britain*, 1962

Does this explain to you the 'alarming picture of co-ordinated drift' which he portrays? Is it irrational to believe that Britain could once more give what we have given in the past – a moral lead in the world?

The Albion Party

"The secret of success" said Cosimo de Medici, "is to aim at finite ends."

- He was right, so far as this "mortal coil" is concerned.
- If you would like to join in this success.
- If you are numb with disbelief at the BSE (Blaime Someone Else) Disease.
- If you feel bored, confused, angry or dismayed at the prospect of a General Election, perhaps more aptly characterised, so far as the "honor" of the principle Parties is concerned, as the Unspeakable in full pursuit of the Unspeakable.
- If you wish to return local democracy to the People.
- If you think a Referendum on the Maastricht Treaty is the People's democratic right before any further transfer of Britain's sovereignty takes place.
- If you believe that if we cannot change the minds of those European Leaders, apparently bent on a European Super-State, then our innate energy and ability will brace us for a Nation's role in a "world which is our oyster".
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obituaries/gazette

General Alejandro Lanusse

Like many Argentine soldiers of his generation, General Alejandro Lanusse spent more time fighting and conspiring in the political arena than on any battlefield. Lanusse liked to be known as the man who brought democracy back to Argentina at the start of the 1970s; many Argentines remained unconvinced of his democratic credentials.

Born into an upper middle class family in the Argentine capital, Buenos Aires, the young Alejandro Lanusse followed the traditional Argentine career path: military college, and then at the age of 20, enrolment in the cavalry, considered the most patrician branch of the army.

Lanusse was deeply suspicious of Colonel Juan Domingo Perón, who was part of the revolutionary army group which took power in 1942, but used his

position to launch his own political movement. In 1951, the young Captain Lanusse took part in a failed attempt to oust Perón, by then president, from power. He was punished with a life term in jail, but only served four years of his sentence, until Perón was deposed in the 1955 military takeover. As a reward for his anti-Peronism, Lanusse was not only released from prison, but promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. By 1960, he was Chief of Staff of the Third Cavalry Division.

Through the next decade, Lanusse was a key figure in the often tumultuous world of the military politicians, who were attempting to rule Argentina while excluding the Peronists. He became part of the army high command, and supported the faction led by General Juan Carlos Onganía which took power in 1966. By 1968,

Lanusse was Commander-in-Chief of the army, and then in March 1971 emerged from his position as kingmaker to take over the presidency.

These years saw increasing protests by the still-hungry Peronist trade unionists and activists. It was also the time when extremist groups were taking on the Argentine state with acts of terror and sabotage. Lanusse became convinced that only a political compromise with the Peronists could ensure stability. He first sought to form a political accord known as the Great National Agreement, by means of which the parties would agree the steps necessary for the return to a free vote and an elected government.

At the same time, Lanusse hoped he could prevent Perón himself returning to Argentina. He negotiated the return of Evita Perón's dead body, and al-

lowed Perón to recover the rank of General. But when he uttered what became his best known phrase, affirming that Perón would never return to Argentina "either because he doesn't want to, or doesn't have the guts", Lanusse only revealed how out of touch he was with the political situation.

The Peronists triumphed in the 1973 elections, and Lanusse was ousted and spat on as he left the presidential palace in May 1973 to make way for the Peronist Hector Campora. Perón himself soon took over the presidency, but following his death in 1974, subsequent Peronist governments floundered in a welter of violence, corruption and indecision. In March 1976, the armed forces took power once again.

This was already the next generation of military commanders. They regarded Lanusse with

suspicion for having allowed the Peronists back into power, and themselves decided that a tough line was the only response to violence and "subversion". When the leaders of this military coup sanctioned a massive campaign of making suspects "disappear" rather than arresting and trying them, killing more than 9,000 Argentines in the process, Lanusse became openly critical of their methods, although critics pointed out that the first reprisals against left-wing activists had been taken while he was president. He protested most strongly when one of his press secretaries joined the lists of the disappeared people; and when eventually in 1985 the deposed military leaders were put on trial for their human rights crimes, Lanusse testified against them.

In recent years, he continued to stress that he had always sup-

ported an army which, in his words, "existed for the fatherland, rather than the fatherland existing for the army". He wrote three volumes of autobiography seeking to justify his own position, and continued his criticism of Peronism with attacks on the policies of the present government under Carlos Menem.

At his death, he was still a polemical figure, with many Argentines arguing that he had been a basically decent, honest person, while others saw him as the archetype of generations of Argentine soldiers, constantly meddling in politics without any political vision.

Nick Calster

Alejandro Lanusse, army officer: born Buenos Aires 28 August 1918; President of Argentina 1971-73; married Ileana Bell (nine children); died Buenos Aires 26 August 1996.



Lanusse, 1973: the man who brought democracy back to Argentina?

Joyce Plesters



Art conservation: Plesters operating the Zeiss Laser Microspectral Analyser, National Gallery, c1974

Joyce Plesters spent the whole of her working life, from 1949 to her retirement in 1987, in the Scientific Department of the National Gallery. To some this is suggestive of the ivory tower or cloistered seclusion, it is also a demonstration that a talent allowed to grow and flourish in a relatively stress-free environment, free from oppressive management structures, can maximise the benefits for all.

Her work on the technical examination of paintings was seminal and its effect was felt throughout the world of art history and paintings conservation.

Joyce Plesters was 22 when she was appointed by Ian Rawlins, the then Scientific Adviser, and A.E. Werner, the Research Chemist, to join them as an assistant in their very small department. She had studied basic science at Royal Holloway College, London University, but had no specialised qualifications for the job since none existed at that time. She helped Rawlins with the X-radiography of the paintings - something he had started in the 1930s - but more importantly she embarked on her main theme, the examination of small paint samples by chemical microscopy.

One of the aims of this research was to assist the restorers of the newly created Conservation Department to address problems in their work which could not always be solved with the naked eye alone; distinguishing between the original paint, the artist's own re-paint and later restoration, for example. This was done both by the identification of individual pigments and, most important-

ly, by the study of cross-sections of minute paint fragments embedded in a transparent synthetic resin block.

For many years her only apparatus was an 1895 Leitz microscope, but her extraordinary aptitude for this sort of work was promptly recognised and it soon became clear that the study of the technical aspects of paintings was emerging as a subject in its own right, and one which art historians could in future disregard only at their peril. By the time of her retirement she had furthered the best equipment, including an electron microscope, while parallel activities in the Scientific Department had also greatly expanded.

It is a commonplace of certain art journalism to represent conservators and scientists in this field as white-coated soulless technicians blind to the beauties of the works beneath their scalpels. This would be a vile slander if it were not so obvious a caricature. It cannot be too much emphasised that Joyce Plesters loved the paintings. Her daily familiarity with them over decades and her minute study of the methods of the old masters could only serve to increase her delight at what they accomplished with the limited materials at their disposal.

In the 1950s and early 1960s almost no other institutions in Britain, and few in the United States and on the Continent undertook this sort of work. Thus her help was often sought and analyses of varied kinds were undertaken for other museums and galleries. Increasingly invitations came from abroad for advice on individual projects or in setting up centres for similar work. In those more liberal

days such absences were not thought incompatible with responsibilities closer to home.

In 1966 and 1967 she helped to set up laboratories in both Venice and Florence for the microchemical study of paintings, following the floods there and the urgent conservation problems which resulted. She retained her connection with Venice for many years and it was probably Venetian painting of the 16th century which was her main love. The restoration of the church of the Madonna dell'Orto, financed by the Venice in Peril fund, together with its enormous paintings by Tintoretto, probably helped to form her particular attachment to and study of that artist which continued into the years of her retirement.

In 1959 Joyce Plesters married Norman Brommelle, who had been a restorer at the National Gallery and later became Keeper of the Conservation Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Norman also became Secretary-General of the International Institute of Conservation, so together they were a weighty presence in the conservation world. Norman could be rather touchy and sooner or later had fallings-out with many colleagues but Joyce never allowed this to affect her own relations with them.

Uninterested in administration and promotions she despised those whose activities seemed only to be stepping stones on the career ladder. Extremely feminine, in her younger days she seemed to me much to resemble an often reproduced portrait sketch of Jane Austen, and like Austen too her very good humour and

sense of fun were much appreciated by her many friends. She was a wonderful cook and hostess and her reward came, perhaps, with the after-dinner conversation, from which professional gossip was not absent.

Among her fund of stories she would sometimes recall with amusement an early abortive job interview with the Zoological Society, at which a kindly board member had cautioned her not to expect to handling the larger mammals right away. Smaller mammals, in the form of cats and dogs, were always a part of her home.

In 1987 she retired and removed with her husband to an Umbrian farmhouse, on a hillside outside the small village of Morra, which they had partly "done up" during summer holidays. It had a large piece of land attached which was to be terraced, landscaped and planted in the years to follow, activities to which they were no strangers having furnished no fewer than three houses and gardens previously.

Sadly Norman died suddenly in late 1989 but Joyce resolved to stay on: she had no relatives in England and Italy was now her home. For six years - it should have been many more - she continued with the improvements, fortified by the help of many neighbours, both Italian and immigrant, and her house was a magnet for old friends and colleagues when they were in Italy.

John Mills

Rosa Joyce Plesters, conservation scientist: born Studley, Warwickshire 13 April 1927; married 1959 Norman Brommelle (died 1989); died Cusà di Castello, Italy 21 August 1996.

James McLamore

James McLamore was the co-founder of the Burger King chain of fast-food restaurants and architect of the hamburger known as the Whopper. He helped to alter America's, and later the world's, eating habits, with quick service and cheap hamburgers.

In 1954 McLamore and his co-founder Dave Edgerton opened the first Insta Burger King in Miami, which featured the pioneering "flame-grilled" system of chain broiler cooking. The Whopper and the Whopper with Cheese, which are now consumed at the rate of 2 million a day, were introduced by McLamore in 1957, the same year that Insta was dropped

from the name. A year later television advertising and early franchising pushed the company on to a national stage. "There are only two things our customers have: time and money, and they don't like spending either of them, so we better sell them hamburgers quickly," McLamore said in 1994, explaining how Burger King's 15-second service philosophy had grown into the second largest hamburger chain in the world, with more than 7,200 restaurants.

A former chief executive of Burger King, Barry Gibbons praised him for developing a "very, very early and clear concept of branding even before it was sophisticated and designed as such".

McLamore was ranked with McDonald's Ray Kroc and Kentucky Fried Chicken's Harlan Sanders as leaders in the fast-food industry. He and Edgerton sold the business to Pillsbury in 1967, now part of Grand Metropolitan. McLamore served as Burger King's president until 1970 and as Chief Executive Officer until 1972. In 1993, he was drafted back in to help reinvigorate the company, which had suffered a bewildering diversification of products.

McLamore was a benefactor and trustee of Miami University, at one time part-owner of the Miami Dolphins American football team and, as an avid gardener, served as president of Fairchild Tropical Gardens.

Edward Helmore

James Whitman McLamore, businessman: born New York City 30 May 1926; married (one son, three daughters); died Coral Gables, Florida 7 August 1996.

Robert Tewdwr Moss

Robert Tewdwr Moss was a consummate journalist who would appreciate the finer details of his own biography. Like some ghost of the *fin de siècle* past, he moved through literary, journalistic and café society, clad in velvet and brocade, surreptitiously passing on a morsel of gossip here, imparting some arcane piece of knowledge there.

John Walsh, who employed him on his long stint as diarist on the *Sunday Times* books section, recalls him "cooling into one's ear as one sat at the computer terminal... surrounded by a volcanic cloud of Parma violets".

Tewdwr Moss's charming ways talked him into all manner of journalistic coups. He recently managed to persuade the Royal Academy to allow him unprecedented access to their Summer Show adjudication for a *Telegraph* piece. Occasionally his intrepid fearlessness and love of gossip led him into trouble: indiscreet pieces on the Waldegrave and the St Germans in *Tatler* caused certain furore.

Such qualities inform his travel book, *Cleopatra's Wedding Present: travels in Syria*, which Tewdwr Moss was revising for February publication by Fourth Estate the night before he died. Christopher Potter, his editor, was delighted with the book, "full of life... written just as he told his anecdotes... of stories and scrapes." Indeed, he had just received proofs of the dust jacket when I last met him, at his friend the publisher Robin Baird-Smith's birthday party, at the Traveller's Club last month.

It was Tewdwr Moss's natural environment: a roomful of personalities, each of whose Achilles' heels he had long ago logged for future reference, and through whom he swam stylishly, his neck unseasonably swathed in velvet, his close friend and muse Aislinn Wain at his side.

He had a certain magnetism for glamorous women: another friend at one time was the actress Joely Richardson, while at the other end of the age scale (he was no upholder of ageism), he often took friends to visit his

confidante Elaine Robson-Scott, to hear tales of Christopher Isherwood.

It was through the Iranian-born Mrs Wain that Tewdwr Moss acquired his passion for the Middle East, on which subject he became extraordinarily knowledgeable. He had already gained a First in English from Bedford College, London, after which he modelled at St Martin's and taught Italian at a Bel-size Park crammer (he had himself been educated at a girls' boarding school: "I didn't know a word, and had to mug it up on the number 13 bus en route").

His writing career had up until then consisted of contributions to the quarterly magazine *West Africa*. In 1988 he wrote (on yellow notepaper) to the editor at *Woman's Journal*, seeking employment. Victor Oliver and his deputy editor, Christie Hickman, recall Tewdwr Moss's first entrance into the IPC offices: a whiff of trademark carnation, then Robert himself, "in a greenish suit, wing collars and flowery bow tie", his hair in a pony-tail,

looking "extremely beautiful". He was much too extraordinary to write under mundane "Robert Moss", declared Oliver, and after a trawl through the Plantagenets, his new byline was born. Christie Hickman praised his "ear for the bizarre": he once conducted a vox pop on the contents of women's handbags, and returned from an interview with Roy Strong with a piece of clothing inordinately on the man's cusp (no greater lobbyist for the Cat Protection League than Tewdwr Moss, his coat tails hung with moggies' hairs).

Sacked from *Woman's Journal* - his style too byzantine for the new regime - Tewdwr Moss worked his way through *DX*, the *Express* magazine, to the *Evening Standard's* "Londoner's Diary", a post in which he excelled, lurching disgruntled soldiers with trips to the opera. His stint on *The People* with Jane Preston redefined the tabloid diary flat, having choked to death. His flat had been ransacked, and the word processor containing his final revision of *Cleopatra's Wedding Present* taken.

It is an undeservedly ugly end to a life of such wit and charm. Tewdwr Moss was naturally attracted to colourful personalities. "He had all these freaks in love with him," recalls Oliver, "and when he wrote about family scandals he found himself pursued by men and women and mad countesses". In between jobs, he "really struggled" - he was penniless quite often.

Indeed, Oliver discerned a deep streak of melancholia in his life latterly: "He was very bleak about his lifestyle". Tewdwr Moss's turbulent and adventurous emotional life had become self-destructive, and it was often left to his long-suffering landlady, Leonora, to get him out of scrapes.

His final scrape came last Saturday. The exact circumstances of his death have yet to be ascertained, but he was found bound and gagged in his Paddington flat, having choked to death. His flat had been ransacked, and the word processor containing his final revision of *Cleopatra's Wedding Present* taken.

Tewdwr Moss, "arch, precise and hysterical".

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Tewdwr Moss: "arch, precise and hysterical" Photograph: Nigel Spalding

to an elegant life, and no one who knew Robert Tewdwr Moss will entertain any memory other than that of a handsome, willowy young man with a quizzical, innocent look on his face as he told you something so louché, surreal, and hilarious that you had to laugh out loud.

He was kind, generous and witty, and London will be duller for the lack of him.

Philip Hoare

Robert (Tewdwr) Moss, writer: born Congleton, Cheshire 29 December 1961; died London 24 August 1996.

DEATHS

BATES: On 26 August, Timothy Bates, beloved husband of Margaret and father of George and Albert. Private family cremation. No flowers please but donations if desired to Hodgkins Disease and Lymphoma Association, PO Box 275, Haddenham, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP17 8J. A thanksgiving service will be held in London on a date to be announced.

HELISING: Jan, on 26 August, aged 60 years, peacefully, in St Luke's Hospice, Sheffield. Loving mother of Anna and Nick, and grandmother of Fiona and Millie. Service and cremation at the Huddfield Wood Crematorium, Sheffield, on Friday 30 August at 12 noon. No flowers. Donations please, made payable to Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund or St Luke's Hospice, may be sent to

Births, Marriages & Deaths

Wood Funeral Service, 848 Eccleall Road, Sheffield S11 8TE

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (airfax). Advertisements, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries. In Memoriam should be sent to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, (telephone 0171-293 2012) or faxed to 0171-293 2016, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Birthdays

The Duke of Argyll, Keeper of the Great Seal of Scotland, 59; Mr Michael Arthur, diplomat, 46; Sir Kenneth Berrill, economist, 76; The Right Rev John Bone, Bishop of Reading, 66; Sir Ralph Kimer Brown, former High Court judge, 87; Mr John Carlisle MP, 54; Sir Cecil Clothier QC, former chairman, Police Complaints Authority, 77; Miss Imogen Cooper, concert pianist, 47; Lord Cullip, former newspaper chairman, 83; Professor Wendy Davies, historian, 54; Mr Windsor Davies, actor, 66; Miss Janet France, novelist, 72; Mr Ben Gazzara, actor, 66; Sir Rupert Hart-Davis, author, editor and former publisher, 89; Sir Godfrey Hounsfield, inventor of the EM1-scanner, 77; Mr Emily Hughes, footballer and broadcaster, 49; General Sir William Jackson, former Governor, Gibraltar, 79; Professor Sir John Kingman, Vice-Chancellor, Bristol University, 57; Dr Joseph Latta, former secretary-general of NATO, 85; Air Chief Marshal Sir Nigel Maynard, 75; Miss Elaine Melor, jockey, 53; Mr Donald O'Connor, actor and dancer, 71; Sir Christopher Paine, president, Royal College of Radiologists, 61; Mr Max Robertson, radio commentator and broadcaster, 81; Miss Emma Samms, actress, 36; Sir Thomas Scovener, former colonial administrator, 88; Mr John Sheffield, chairman, Fortis Holdings, 58; Mr John Shirley-Quirk, bass-baritone, 65; Mr David Soul, actor, 52; Sir Peter Thornton, former senior civil servant, 79; Professor Roger Williams, hepatologist, 65.

Anniversaries

Births: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, poet, playwright and author, 1749; Antoine-Augustin Cournot, mathematician and economist, 1801; Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, novelist, 1814; Thomas Seddon, landscape painter, 1821; Ira David Sankey, hymn-writer and revivalist, 1840; Bernhard Friedrich Wilhelm Listermann, violinist and conductor, 1841; George Hoyt Whipple, pathologist, 1878; Peter Fraser, statesman, 1884; Edward Vance Palmer, novelist, 1885; Ivor (Bertie) Gurney, poet and

composer, 1890; Liam O'Flaherty, novelist, 1896; Charles Boyer, actor, 1897; Deaths: St Augustine of Hippo, 430; Hugo Grotius, jurist and lawyer, 1645; Karl Theodor Körner, poet, playwright and patriot, 1813; William Smith, geologist, 1839; James Henry Leigh Hunt, critic and poet, 1839; Albrecht Adam, painter, 1862; Ernest Odell Lawrence, physicist, 1958; Bohuslav Martinů, composer, 1959; Prince William of Gloucester, killed in an air crash 1972. On this day: the Scots routed the Royalist army at the Battle of Newburn, 1640; Wagner's opera *Lohengrin* was first performed in Weimar, 1850; Montenegro was proclaimed an independent kingdom under Nicholas I, 1910; US forces under General George Marshall landed in Japan, 1945; 200,000 black Americans demonstrated in Washington for civil rights, 1963. Today is the Feast Day of St Alexander of Constantinople, St Augustine of Hippo, St Edmund Arrowsmith, St Hermes of Rome, St John of Constantinople, St Julian of Brioude, St Moses of Abyssinia and St Paul IV of Constantinople.

Lectures

National Gallery: Judy Egerton, *Houses (iv): Stubbs, Whitejacket*, 1pm. Tate Gallery: Iain Dickson Gill, "Painting like Picasso is a Living Voice": Abstract painting after the Second World War", 1pm. National Portrait Gallery (guided tour): "The Creative Spirit: portraits of writers, artists and scientists 1900-1937", 2.30pm.

Joan Thirkettle

A Memorial Service for Joan Thirkettle will be held at noon on Tuesday 3 September 1996, at St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London EC4.

European Engineers

The following have been awarded the qualification European Engineer by the European Federation of National Engineering Associations (FEAND): M.J. Allwright, M. Anderson, D. Argon-Halt, R. Barratt, J. Bate, R. Billington, M. Brannley, B. Brady, D. Butler, A.H.C. Chan, C.H. Che

ung, A.W. Cook, P. Connolly, J.S. Dak, M. Daboy, O. Desautour, M. Downes, J. Eberhart, A. Fairhurst, I. Fog, M. Gamm, G. Gigante, R. Goodall, T.S. Green, R.R. Hall, J. Harwood, J. Hase, B. Hovatt, K.P. Hobb, J. Holter, T. Hudson, P.W. Johnson, M. Joseph, O. Kozu, P.J. Kerry, J.T. Lane, J.M. Lee, S.M. E. Macken, C. Manon, V.S. Marshall, S. Meacham, G. Michalski, O. Milic, P. Mearns, O. Mardoch, M. Odgers, K. O'Neil, S. Pearson, M. Punt, V.H. Ryle, R. Baker, O. Blasen, F. Roberts, M. Roper, J.M. Russell, K.T. Sague, C. Schenker, P. Semmling, J. Smith, G. Smith, H.C. Soy, C. Thompson, G. Tucker, M.E. Waters-Knight, S.A. Wadhwa, J. Williams, C. Watson, O. Watts, A. Williams, P. Wilson, J. Wilson, O.P. Wood, A. Wood, T. Woodhead, O. Yusuf, X. Zheng.

Church appointments

The following appointments have been announced by the Church of England: The Rev Timothy Edge, Assistant Curate, Bessworth (Contract) to be Team Vicar, Team Ministry (Oxford). The Rev Mark Godwin, Priest-in-charge, St Albans (Hemel Hempstead) to be Chaplain, Fort Hill House Trust (Chesham). The Rev David Hodgson, Priest-in-charge, Hatfield, Broad Oak and Bush End, and Incumbent, Hatfield (Chesham) to be

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, Patron, the Butler Trust, visits HM Prison Southwark, Her Majesty's Prison, London.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; 3rd Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

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business

BSkyB's monopoly puts it ahead of the game



COMMENT

While everyone else, the BBC included, is getting cold feet over going it alone in digital TV, BSkyB is forging ahead; interactive TV, even the Internet, will soon be available via the little black box

BSkyB's stock-market value edged its way through the £10bn mark for the first time yesterday. In itself this is an unremarkable occurrence, for joining the Ten Billion Pound Club doesn't alter BSkyB's relative position in the FT-SE 100 Index; it remains Britain's 16th most highly valued company. Nonetheless, achieving that kind of market capitalisation is an important milestone for any company, and in this case it is doubly so for it has been reached at record speed. Sky is little more than 10 years old and in its merged BSkyB form it is only five years old. It is now larger in market value than household names such as Sainsbury, Guinness and Grand Metropolitan.

What's BSkyB's secret? In the main, it's called being an unregulated monopoly. Nobody else has yet managed to get a look in on British pay TV. While so much of the rest of TV remains "free", and BSkyB continues to maintain its grip on key movies and sports events, nor will they. BSkyB is largely free to charge what it likes.

To be fair, however, there is a little bit more to it than that. Rupert Murdoch took big risks in supporting Sky when most observers said it couldn't possibly work. He bet his company, and his own personal wealth, in doing so. More remarkably still, BSkyB has proved highly effective in defending its monopoly, both politically and commercially. BSkyB was never going to let go of the Premier League and it paid what it took to keep it. Its position was barely

touched by the Broadcasting Act and when the Office of Fair Trading eventually bit, it was a mere shadow of the organisation that originally backed it.

Clever defence of monopoly has been accompanied by imaginative extension of its boundaries. While everyone else, the BBC included, is getting cold feet over going it alone in digital TV, BSkyB is forging ahead; interactive TV, even the Internet, will soon be available via the little black box. As a lesson in how to get something for nothing, BSkyB's negotiations with the German media tycoon, Leo Kirch, have proved masterful. Mr Kirch seems to have given away half his company merely because he feared the consequences of having Mr Murdoch and Sam Chisholm offside rather than on.

There are plenty of good reasons why BSkyB should not command the sky-high rating it does. No monopoly lasts forever and BSkyB will soon have to invest heavily in programming and technology to support it. On present form, however, BSkyB still looks nimble enough to stay one step ahead of the game. The BSkyB phenomenon is no mere investment bubble.

The Pru must exercise caution with the coffers

Peter Davis should be a happy man. He has secured a good price for Mercantile & General and will soon have £1.75bn of

loose change jangling about in his back pocket. In one fell swoop, the Pru has amassed a sizeable war chest to fund its long-stated ambition of acquiring either a building society or a mutual life company. Targets, including the Woolwich, have already been identified and an acquisition will be announced shortly. Before the Pru goes on a buying spree, however, it still needs to explain why this strategy is such a good idea.

The argument advanced by Mr Davis is straightforward. What we are seeing, he claims, is a transformation of the financial services industry. The Pru reflects this trend, but in addition aspires to be among the top six or seven players worldwide. This means strengthening and expanding its retail business in the UK, and eventually expanding overseas. Buying a building society would seem to further this ambition for it would add several million new customers to the Pru's 6 million-strong client base. That's a lot more pensions and life cover for Prudential salespeople to sell to.

The problem is that the cost of buying this presence is going to be high. The Woolwich's sale price is now rumoured to be upwards of £1.5bn and rising, quite a lot for a set of shopfronts in Dudley town centre and elsewhere. For your money you get a large and attractive mortgage book, and a good spread of well-heeled savers. But here's the bad bit: you also get an increasingly redundant cost base. Nobody is suggesting that the Woolwich would prove as poor an acquisition as

the Pru's ill-fated expansion into the hosiery of estate agents in the late 1980s, but just remember, it was the same sort of logic that applied then as well - the idea of convergence of all areas of personal finance.

After a slow start, telephone banking and mortgage lending is beginning to take off. The traditional business and customer bases of banks and building societies will look very different 10 years from now.

This is not to condemn Mr Davis's strategy before we have seen it properly unveiled. But to have £1.75bn burning a hole in your back pocket can be a mighty dangerous thing. The risk of overpaying seems high.

End of August deadline was a bit of a myth

Deadline, what deadline? Until now, it had been widely assumed that Lloyd's must prove to the Department of Trade and Industry by the end of August that it is solvent, or risk being forced to close its doors to new business. A similarly tight deadline was said to exist on the other side of the Atlantic, where the lead regulator for the US, the New York Insurance Department, is expecting proof of solvency by 1 September, or at the very latest by the end of next week.

This Armageddon-type message, that the rescue must go through by the end of the month, has been used liberally by lawyers for Lloyd's in the US, in their attempts to fight

judicial delays to the £3.2bn rescue plan. Yesterday it proved wonderfully persuasive, as three US appeals court judges sided with Lloyd's and overturned a lower court injunction delaying the rescue.

But the decision was certainly not a foregone conclusion. The regulators themselves - preparing for the worst - were taking pains earlier yesterday to backpedal from the idea that the end of the month or indeed the beginning of September represented some great cliff over which Lloyd's would fall if it failed to prove solvency in time.

According to the DTI, British law requires an annual proof of solvency, but the end August date is a matter of custom and is not set down in the regulations. The solvency test is sometimes completed in August, at other times, in early September, but officials have flexibility and could wait longer if it were thought necessary.

The New York Insurance Department was equally dismissive of the supposed early September deadline for passing the solvency test in the US, which a spokesman said was simply based on the timetable for the rescue plan set in the UK by Lloyd's and the DTI. In other words, if the DTI is flexible and allows Lloyd's further time to pass its solvency test, then the US authorities could decide to be just as helpful.

In the event, they have been spared the necessity. Lloyd's has played a game of bluff and brinkmanship in a masterly fashion, and now seems home and dry.

Pru set for bid as it sells reinsurer in £1.75bn deal

NIC CICUTTI

Prudential, the UK's largest insurer, yesterday cleared the decks for its long-awaited bid for a building society or a mutual life company, as it announced the sale of its reinsurance subsidiary, Mercantile & General for £1.75bn.

The sale to Swiss Re, another leading global reinsurer provides the Pru with additional funds for its massive war chest. The Pru has made no secret of its aim to re-assert itself as a leading financial service player in the UK, with its own savings and loans operation.

Analysts said yesterday that the £1.75bn, when it is finally handed over in three or four months' time, would enable the Pru to move against almost any acquisition target it chooses, barring the Halifax, valued at more than £10bn.

The sale of M&G back to Swiss Re, some 30 years after the Swiss firm sold it to the Pru

in the first place, also marks the latest stage in the rapid rationalisation of the reinsurance industry.

Peter Davis, group chief executive at Prudential, said that despite its after-tax profits of £135m, including investment gains, M&G remained peripheral to the group's overall strategy.

He said: "There is no significant operational and strategic synergies between M&G and our core operations."

"Following a review of our strategy, we decided to concentrate our activities on retail financial services and fund management. We announced in June our intention to reduce our investment in [the company] by floating a proportion on the stock market."

Mr Davis added: "After careful consideration, we have decided that a sale of the whole company at the agreed price, which we believe substantially exceeds what we could have

achieved through a public offering, is clearly in the best interests of our shareholders."

He said the Pru would, as it has previously indicated, continue in its process of identifying suitable acquisition targets in line with its strategy.

But Mr Davis added: "We have spoken to several of our leading shareholders and we are under no pressure from them. Their response is that we should not rush to pay over the odds."

He said that even if a purchase is agreed, one consequence of mutualisation was that the need to consult members and overcome many regulatory hurdles meant many months might pass before it is complete.

The purchase of M&G by Swiss Re, in which it was advised by Morgan Stanley, the investment bank, marks the latest stage in the rationalisation of reinsurers.

Reinsurance is one of the world's biggest and least known financial service industries, in



Peter Davis: 'A sale of the whole company at the agreed price is in the best interests of our shareholders'

which companies underwrite insurance sold by others for a portion of the premium paid.

In the past two years, several leading players have engaged in a series of takeover battles. Swiss Re earlier this month lost out to Munich Re in a bid

for US property and casualty reinsurer American Re. Its bigger rival paid \$3.3bn (£2.5bn).

A bid for M&G is also believed to have been made by Employers Re, another rival insurer which has recently taken

over two German companies, Aachen Re and Franconia Re. It is believed that the agreement with the Pru during the Bank Holiday followed a last-minute decision by the Swiss to trump the Employers Re bid.

M&G's own attraction is in the field of life and health insurance in which it was always a leading player. After the acquisition is completed by the end of this year, Swiss Re will be the largest life and health reinsurer in the world, with a market share of 27 per cent.

Banks sued by currency changer

NIC CICUTTI

Barclays and National Westminster are being sued in the US by Chequepoint Worldcash, a small currency-changing and money transfer firm which alleges the two UK banks tried to drive it out of business.

Chequepoint's writ, in which unspecified damages are claimed, alleges that Barclays' move followed the firm's entry into the lucrative international money transfer business.

Not only did Barclays stop doing business with Chequepoint without giving prior notice, it also intervened to prevent NatWest from offering an alternative banking relationship with the firm.

The claims, being made before a court in New York, are strongly denied by both Barclays and NatWest.

Chequepoint, which is valued in the US at about \$60m (£45m), is a subsidiary of Capital Currency Exchange, an Antilles-registered company. In the US, it specialises in 24-hour currency exchange kiosks aimed at passing tourists. The firm also operates in a number of European countries, including the UK.

In 1990, the firm expanded into the international money transfer business, which it claims places it in direct conflict with banks operating in the same field.

In its suit, filed in the Federal Court under US anti-trust law, Chequepoint alleges that in May 1995, Barclays Bank, with which it did business for 18 years, suddenly stopped doing so. Barclays also blocked NatWest from establishing a relationship with Chequepoint, the suit claims.

The effect of this action has been to cause "severe damage" to Chequepoint, including lost profits and increased expenses.

A Barclays spokeswoman said the bank's lawyers in New York had not yet received a copy of the writ, but would be contesting the law suit "vigorously". NatWest also said the suit would be defended.

IN BRIEF

• United News & Media plans to sell its regional newspaper holdings in the South-east and Wales. The South-east business includes 28 free weekly newspaper titles, comprising the Informer group of publications to the west of London, the Advertiser North London group and the Yellow Advertiser group in Essex and North East London. The South Wales operation has a portfolio of 19 free and paid-for titles, including the daily *South Wales Argus*. Lord Hollick, chief executive of United, said "the proposed divestment will allow us to concentrate on and develop our local media interests in the North, where we already have a strong portfolio of titles." The bulk of United's regional newspaper profits come from the *Yorkshire Post*, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, *Sheffield Star*, and the *Lancashire Evening Post*.

• Boeing is boosting monthly production of its new 777 jetliner by 40 per cent and is hiring 5,000 more workers this year than originally planned to meet surging demand. The world's largest commercial airplane maker will add about 13,200 workers this year, increasing its total number of employees to 118,350 by the year-end, up from about 105,000 on 1 January. Boeing had planned to add 8,200 workers this year. Boeing also said that, by July 1997, monthly production of the twin-engine 777 would rise to seven from five. The hiring spree, Boeing's first in seven years, comes as airlines around the world use their surging profits to replace old aircraft. Seattle-based Boeing has booked 333 orders for new jetliners so far this year, compared with 346 for all of last year and just 120 in 1994. *Bloomberg*

• The IFO research institute said the German business climate "improved significantly" in July. In its latest monthly report, IFO said scepticism about the future was on the decline and hopes of a pick up in exports were on the rise. "Obviously, more companies see themselves in a position to consider raising production," IFO said. "But the scope for raising prices is only moderate and companies have not revised plans to cut jobs."

• The EU can help cut European unemployment by introducing the single currency and completing the single market, according to a new report from the Federal Trust, a Euro-think-tank. However, the report, *Prosperity of the Union*, argues that greater competition, tax reform and deregulation to lift the social burden placed on industry would be necessary to stimulate growth. It favours, in addition, lower taxes on unskilled workers to help price them back into jobs and a job creation package.

• Regent Inns is buying Crossgate Leisure, which operates 18 cafe bars, snooker and sports bars in north and south England, for £6.28m. The group, which owns 46 public houses, hotels and restaurants, said it also planned a geographic expansion of its pub estate through acquisitions in the Midlands and North.

• John Lewis Partnership said it expected a 7.5 per cent year-on-year rise in sales for the second half of the year to January 1997. The employee-owned department stores and supermarkets group said sales in the first three weeks of the second half were up 13.7 per cent from a year ago and up 23.9 per cent from two years ago.

• Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, has decided not to refer the Agip purchase of Sun Oil Britain, or the acquisition by Flight Precision of the flight checking service of the Civil Aviation Authority to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

• Virgin Express has decided to postpone its planned service between Brussels and Geneva. The flights, which were due to begin next Monday, have been postponed until further notice due to no agreement having been reached with Swiss aviation officials over fare levels.

Caradon does deal with mystery buyer

PATRICK TOOHER

Caradon, the struggling building products group at the centre of an alleged insider dealing scandal, yesterday took the usual step of announcing the sale of most of its engineering and distribution businesses but declined to reveal the identity of the prospective buyer.

In a brief statement issued yesterday Caradon told the Stock Exchange it had agreed outline terms with an unnamed buyer in a deal that will raise more than £190m. Analysts believe Caradon was bonned into making a statement after details of the deal were leaked to a Sunday newspaper.

"The article prompted them into making an announcement rather than wait until they published interim results on 12

September," said Robert Griffiths at brokers Albert E Sharp.

In January the Stock Exchange said it had sent to the Department of Trade and Industry for possible further action the findings of its own inquiry into dealings in Caradon shares ahead of a profits warning a year ago.

The inquiry centred on alleged links between Financial Dynamics, a public relations firm and adviser to Caradon, and merchant bank Robert Fleming. The DTI yesterday declined to comment on the affair.

Mystery surrounds the identity of the would-be buyer of Caradon's engineering and distribution businesses. However, two venture capital groups, believed to be Morgan Grenfell and Nat West, were told they would not be the preferred



Jansen: 'businesses are not a mainstream activity'

hidders, leaving the way clear for a third venture capital group to organise a management buy-in of Caradon's 15 businesses.

In the year to 31 December 1995 the businesses earmarked for disposal made profits of £21m on sales of £264m.

"These are businesses with good prospects, but not a mainstream activity for us," said Caradon chief executive Peter Jansen. "Disposing of them would bring added focus and opportunities to our building products activities in Europe."

The main businesses that are going include construction tools supplier Caradon Parker, engine repairer H+S Aviation and Caradon Rollins, the Manchester-based plastic mouldings manufacturer. In the year to December 1995, the businesses being sold made profits of £21m - or about a fifth of group pre-tax income - on sales of £264m.

The City was unimpressed with the proposed deal and

Caradon's shares fell 3p to 224p. Analysts said Caradon's move was a reactive one that would dilute earnings.

"Caradon smells like a conglomerate," said Robert McDonald at NatWest Securities, "and conglomerates are unfashionable so Caradon is looking to sell some of its businesses."

The company has been heavily criticised for focusing on a premium price strategy for branded products such as Everest windows and MK plugs instead of cutting costs.

In the year to December 1995, Caradon's pre-tax profits fell by 43 per cent to £1.4m in the face of weak housing markets in the US and the UK and a disappointing performance from Weru, the German door and window manufacturer.

Disposals set to trigger war for Lloyds Chemists

MAGNUS GRIMOND

A renewed bidding war for Lloyds Chemists drew closer yesterday after it said agreements had been reached for the depot sales demanded by competition authorities.

Lloyds said it had passed heads of agreement for the disposal of certain wholesale businesses to Gehe of Germany and Unichem, the rival chemists chains whose bids of over £500m for the group lapsed earlier this year after the intervention of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The announcement prompted a 7.5p rise in the share price to 498.5p as the market interpreted the news as bringing forward the prospect of the two sides reopening hostilities. The latest move was also seen as an attempt by Lloyds to end the uncertainty over the future of the group and counter hints that any new offers would

be pitched at a lower level than before. The previous bids were valued at 490p-500p a share when they lapsed in March.

One source close to the company said yesterday: "Quite clearly there have been attempts by both Unichem and Gehe to talk the bid price down and yet here are two bidders who are quite interested in coming back to bid for this organisation, despite what they are saying. I think the market is recognising that now."

The sale agreements, which follow "numerous offers" from prospective purchasers, are conditional on the successful takeover of Lloyds by either of the potential bidders. They have been reached well ahead of the original deadline of 18 October laid down by the Department of Trade and Industry when announcing the conditions on which the bids could proceed last month. Unichem was told it must divest wholesaling op-

erations in Cambridge, Carlisle, Cusdon, Derby, Glasgow and York, with Gehe also being forced to sell an extra unit, in Belfast.

The terms of the deals will be passed to the Office of Fair Trading and the Trade and Industry Department for their approval. The DTI will decide only after receiving the recommendation of the OFT. Neither department could yesterday give any clear indication of how long that process would take. However, a spokesman for the DTI said that, while there was no statutory timetable, "once the submission is received from the Director General of Fair Trading, we would aim to make an announcement as soon as possible."

Some observers suggested a new bid could emerge soon. One analyst said: "We are being lined up for a renewal of bidding, maybe as early as this week."

Volvo's buy-back scheme 'brings down car prices'

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

Volvo has boosted its sales figures this year by "buying" almost a quarter of its own cars, according to internal industry registration figures.

They show the Swedish manufacturer at the top of the league table for captive sales, where cars are registered not to private or company buyers, but to the car makers.

Between January and July, Volvo's captive sales accounted for a huge 23.6 per cent of its total registrations, or 3,776 out of the 16,000 cars sold. Only low-volume manufacturers such as Lotus "buy" more of their own stock, while the industry average for self-registrations is just 5 per cent.

This year's figures for the company are not a one-off. During 1995, Volvo self-registered no less than 6,250 cars, or 16 per cent of its total sales.

Volvo claimed that most of the cars had been leased to its UK employees for a year on "favourable" terms. After 12 months they go to dealers to be sold as used cars.

"Volvo are very generous to their workers," said a spokeswoman. "The leasing scheme is not just a perk for senior management. All administrative staff are entitled to lease a car at subsidised rates."

Captive sales, which generally include demonstration models used by dealers, have been the subject of intense criticism by some in the motor trade, who accuse manufacturers of flooding the market with nearly-new cars, making new models look less attractive.

In recent weeks prices of nearly-new cars have fallen because financial incentives offered by dealers to sell new cars have attracted buyers. However, Volvo insisted there was a shortage of used vehicles and the ex-

isting cars were not being "dumped".

Quentin Wilson from the BBC2 *Top Gear* programme said: "I find it hard to believe that 4,000 cars could be soaked up by Volvo employees. Unless it's properly handled, self-registering 25 per cent of their cars could spell complete and utter disaster for residual values of cars bought new."

This year's captive sales figures include another surprise. Honda, which has one of the highest reputations for quality and reliability, "bought" almost 17 per cent of its cars in the first seven months of the year, with more than 4,000 self-registrations.

Like Volvo, Honda said it ran a popular leasing scheme for its employees. After a year, the cars are sold by dealers as used stock.

A spokesman explained: "We are responding to the public demand for nearly-new cars."

business

Pioneer's advice still holds true

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

One of the enduring mysteries of investment in this country is that there are so few decent books on the subject. Anyone with an interest in gardening or cooking or bridge can find a wealth of reading matter on their hobby, but beyond the odd "How to" primer, most small investors have little to supplement the often cursory coverage of the subject in newspapers.

There are some honourable exceptions, most notably Jim Slater, whose latest book, *Beyond The Zulu Principle*, is due to be published in the autumn. But the bulk of investment books worth a second glance have always come out of America, a country where they take their investment more seriously than we appear to.

Given the similarity of investment on both sides of the Atlantic, it doesn't matter that the books are aimed at an American audience. The principles of investment are the same the world over and change little over the years.

The unchanging nature of sound investment is nicely illustrated by the issue this year of the 1958 investment classic *Common Stocks and Uncommon Profits* by Philip Fisher, an American investor whose career started the year before the Wall Street crash of 1929. What is most striking about the book, which is in the new Wiley Investment Classics edition includes some later writings as well, is just how little of it no longer applies and how much continues to make abundant sense.

It would be impossible to paraphrase all the pearls of wisdom packed into this small book, which sets out as clearly as anyone has done since why growth stocks are the single best long-term investment medium, how to spot them and how to maximise your profits from those you have chosen.

You may be familiar with Warren Buffett's maxim that the best time to sell a share is almost never but are less likely to know that it was Fisher in this book who coined the theory that once a great growth stock has been found, the best approach is to just let it run.

Other great pieces of advice contained in the book include avoiding blue-chip companies that have never made a profit - with so many opportunities for great growth from established companies why take the risk? He also cautions against the view that a company trading on a high price/earnings ratio has necessarily already discounted all its good trading prospects. If the earnings of the stock are growing fast enough, the share will soon look cheap or even less whatever its price.

Investors familiar with Buffett's philosophy will also recognise another extremely useful Fisher "don't" - don't

overstress diversification. We're always being told not to put all our eggs in one investment basket but rarely are we warned of the dangers of spreading risk so widely that we end up investing in companies that we simply haven't researched thoroughly enough. As Buffett once put it, it is baffling why anyone should invest in their twentieth choice when they could simply increase their holding in their favourite share.

The best work from one of the pioneers of modern investment theory is a must-read for investors today, as it was in 1958.

Common Stocks and Uncommon Profits and Other Writings by Philip Fisher, John Wiley & Sons, \$19.95.

Sanderson pulls out the stops

Sanderson Bramall, the Harrogate motor dealer, has been transformed since Tony Bramall took the wheel in 1989. Powered by acquisitions, profits

have soared in the past five years or so, but the latest interim figures show that Mr Bramall, executive chairman, is also adept at squeezing organic growth from the business.

Pre-tax profits leapt 44 per cent to £6.13m in the six months to June, beating expectations and sending the shares 10.5p higher to 303.5p yesterday. The group had the benefit of last year's £5.1m acquisition of most of the outstanding shares in Thrifty Car Rental, which moved from associate to subsidiary status. That added £30m to turnover and raised the profit contribution from rental operations from £356,000 to around £1.3m.

Even so, much of Thrifty's contribution was absorbed by higher interest charges and there was clearly plenty of underlying growth. New car sales jumped 25 per cent to 10,000 units in the first half, easily outpacing a market in the UK which could struggle to top 2 million sales this year, an anaemic growth rate of around 3 per cent. Used cars were in even better form, with sales up over a third to 7,935.

This sparkling performance more than offsets a disappointing period for

commercial vehicles compared with last year, when Sanderson was able to cash in on the rebound in the market following its acquisition of Petrogate, a commercials group, in 1994.

The big questions are what happens to key August sales and, beyond that, whether it can maintain its forward momentum. August looks patchy, while acquisitions are likely to be complicated by the shake-up of dealership rules. That said, profits of £12m should be possible, putting the shares on a forward rating of 13. Fair value.

Darby in the winner's frame

Confirmation yesterday from Darby Group, the Southport glass-maker, that it has received several informal approaches that could lead to a bid, caps a good year for the company's shareholders. The shares soared 32 per cent to 109.5p, valuing Darby at £30m.

At the beginning of the year the shares were languishing at little more than 60p. Shareholders who took up their rights in last autumn's £5m cash call at 50p will be particularly pleased. Though Darby says none of the approaches has developed beyond the preliminary stages, it seems likely that the company is being courted by one of the big glass groups such as Pilkington, Saint Gobain or France, PPG of the United States or Luvigard, the Luxembourg group.

The world's largest glass manufacturers have been squeezed by falling demand and weak prices as customers have built up stocks. As a defensive move they have been going "downstream" to buy consumers of raw glass. Despite its small size, Darby is the largest independently quoted glass manufacturer and a large consumer of raw glass. It has developed a profitable niche in safety glass and has also been expanding its bent and tempered glass business, a higher-margin product that is used in curved shower cubicles, for example. It buys most of its glass from Pilkington and PPG.

Darby is expected to report doubled interim profits of £800,000 before exceptional items on Thursday with brokers Albert E Sharp forecasting £1.2m for the full year. Any deal would have to be agreed as chairman Michael Darby and his family control more than half of the shares. Despite founding the company 20 years ago with just £1,600, Mr Darby is likely to hold out for a premium. Shareholders should do the same and hang on.

Lord Moyne spills the beans on Distillers saga

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

Lord Moyne, better known as Jonathan Guinness, scion of the brewing dynasty, is about to publish his long-awaited history of the Distillers' scandal, *Requiem for a Family Business*.

The peer's account of the 1980s saga threatens to re-ignite a whole series of rows. He is far more favourable to disgraced former Guinness boss Ernest Saunders than one might have expected.

"The atmosphere has totally changed since the time of his (Mr Saunders') conviction. When he had his appeal turned down it was respectfully reported in the press, but when he was convicted everyone said he was a deep-down villain."

Indeed, Lord Moyne, a former director of Guinness, admits that his present feelings toward Mr Saunders are "complicated".

"As a person, I think in many ways he has been hard done by, but I don't go along with the whole of his case by any means."

"I'm on quite friendly terms with him."

The thrust of his book, he adds, will be that the DTT inspectors' report has been made a nonsense of by the various acquittals in the case, and loads of taxpayers' money has been wasted.

"The whole investigation was a mess. I don't think people thought straight."

And the root cause of the scandal? "The City got too lax. Distillers thought we were still gentlemen. Unfortunately, they had another think coming."

As an example, the three women on the drugs team all mysteriously had body mass



Heady brew: Lord Moyne favourable to Ernest Saunders

indices of 14.5, from a "NWM estimate" that they were all 7 stone and 5'10". Mike Ward, of the team, had an index of 24, considered "normal", while Kevin Scotcher scored 28, defined as "overweight".

The circular added that Kevin's score "denotes heavy build rather than any association with the subject of this note".

Know what you mean, Kev. I'm big-boned, myself. One poor analyst fell off the scale, which only runs up to 21 stone. He stormed off to MacDonald's in a huff.

Brian Quinn, who recently retired as executive director for supervision and surveillance at the Bank of England, has been snapped up by Nomura Bank International.

Mr Quinn, who during 20 years in Threadneedle Street has weathered the storms of the Johnson Matthey rescue and the collapse of BCCI and Barings, is heading for calmer waters.

He starts as non-executive chairman alongside Andreas Prindl, who has been chairman since 1993.

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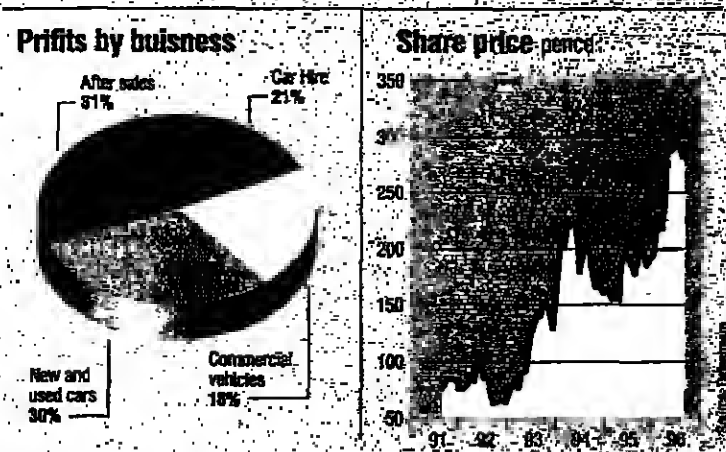
He starts as non-executive chairman alongside Andreas Prindl, who has been chairman since 1993.

SANDERSON BRAMALL: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £1.04m, share price: 303.5p

Trading record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Revenue (£m)	22.1	24.1	26.1	28.1	30.1
Pre-tax profit (£m)	3.7	4.4	5.2	6.1	6.1
EPS (pence)	1.2	1.5	1.8	2.1	2.1

Dividends per share (pence)	2.4	3.2	4.0	4.8	5.6
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Shake-up as Zetters moves into bingo

PATRICK TOOHER

Zetters, the family-run football pools group where three directors have quit this year, yesterday unveiled details of another boardroom shake-up as part of plans to re-enter the bingo business after an absence of eight years.

The company is buying three Jasmine bingo clubs for £600,000 from the Leisure Workshop, where former Rank director Leslie Hunt is chief executive

and ultimate shareholder. Mr Hunt will join the Zetters board as deputy chief executive on completion of the deal and will become chief executive in April when Jim Clarke, the current incumbent, retires.

Robert Updell, non-executive chairman of Jasmine, will also join Zetters as a non-executive director. He is likely to be appointed deputy chairman when Paul Zetter, the chairman, gives up his executive duties next year.

Zetters denied the deal

amounted to a reverse takeover of the company by Jasmine, though finance director Terry Yardley admitted the terms had attracted the Stock Exchange's attention. "There are elements of reverse takeover about the deal but not in financial terms."

The deal, which is being funded by the issue of 500,000 ordinary Zetters shares, means Jasmine will end up speaking for 7 per cent of the enlarged share capital. The Zetters family will

see its stake diluted to 41 per cent. Zetters is also paying £5.9m to Leisure Workshop on completion of the deal to satisfy inter-company debts due to Jasmine.

Zetters, the smallest of the big three pools companies with a market share of 3 per cent, was at the centre of a senior management shake-out in March which saw joint managing director Stephen Eastman leave the company in less than a

month. He followed fellow managing director Alan Bloom and marketing director Alan Blacker through the revolving door.

No reason was given for the departures, though Zetters has suffered along with other pools companies since the introduction of the National Lottery.

In the year to March 1996 pre-tax profits fell to £1.02m from £1.26m on reduced sales of £19.7m (£23.3m). Earnings per share slipped to 10.1p from 12.8p though the interim divi-

dead of 5p was maintained.

The adverse impact of the National Lottery has forced Zetters to target other sectors of the gaming industry and bingo is one area where it has plenty of recent experience. In 1987 it demerged a chain of 30 bingo clubs to form a quoted company, Zetters Leisure, which was bought a year later by Bass.

Jasmine was formed in 1991 to buy eight bingo clubs from Rank following the leisure giant's takeover of Mecca.

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THE INDEPENDENT
section two

Deputy takes over as rail franchise head

CHRIS GODSMARK
Business Correspondent

The Government yesterday ended its search for a new official to manage the privatisation of the rail network, following the decision of the existing director of passenger rail franchising, Roger Salmon, to quit his job two years earlier than planned.

The new head of the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising (Opraf) is John O'Brien, who currently acts as Mr Salmon's second in command. His appointment will last for three years and he takes over the job in the autumn.

Opraf plays a key role in the controversial rail sell-off, by deciding between rival bidders for each of the 25 passenger operating franchises. There had been speculation that Mr Salmon decided to leave his job

early because of Government pressure to speed up the privatisation process.

So far nine passenger franchises have been sold off, with 16 still under British Rail. However, on Friday Opraf announced that Prism Rail, the publicly-listed bus group which this year gained a listing on the Alternative Investment Market, was the preferred bidder for two more franchises: South Wales and West, and Cardiff Railway.

Yesterday Prism said it would launch a rights issue to fund the purchase at 240p a share. The company declined to reveal how much money it intended to raise, though industry sources suggested this would be in the region of £12m.

Prism Rail's shares soared by more than 13 per cent on the announcement, rising by 35p to close at 300p. It means the company has tripped in value since



Roger Salmon: Quit two years earlier than planned

it raised £8m in its float in May, with heavily oversubscribed shares priced at just 100p. The shares more than doubled in value on the first day of trading, netting more than £1m for the chairman, Godfrey Burley.

The company came to public attention earlier this year when it won the franchise to run the London Tilbury and Southend Railway, after Opraf scrapped a management buyout amid allegations of ticketing irregularities. Opraf said Prism's bid to run the network was "significantly" cheaper in terms of state subsidy than British Rail's.

mentation of tighter regulation. DBS has grown to some 1,600 member firms.

The network now places £800m worth of business with product providers and arranges £1bn in mortgages each year, earning its members about £77m in commission income.

DBS's move from AIM to a full listing is the first for a fully trading company. SkypePharma, the AIM-listed drug developer, moved onto the main market following a reverse takeover of Jago, the Swiss drugs firm.

DBS moves from AIM to full listing

NIC CICUTTI

DBS Management, a network for independent financial advisers, is set to become the first AIM-listed company to seek a full stock-market listing.

The company, which is based in Huddersfield, is currently capitalised at about £32m and is seeking a listing before the end of September.

Ken Davy, the company's chairman, who still owns 25 per cent of DBS shares, said: "It has always been our intention to

seek a full listing. I am very pleased that we are able to do it ahead of schedule because we have achieved our targets earlier than we originally planned."

DBS's decision to float comes barely a year after its AIM quotation, in which the firm was initially valued at £10.8m.

The company was founded by Mr Davy in the 1970s, expanding from its function as an independent adviser in a network in the 1980s. Under the network arrangement, an IFA joins DBS and pays the com-

pany a proportion of its commission income.

In return, DBS handles the burden of compliance and regulation, offers training to IFAs and uses a head office research team to identify suitable products for its members to sell to their clients. The network also negotiates higher commission rates for its members.

The network grew to about 700 member firms by the early 1990s. Since the formation of the Personal Investment Authority in 1994 and the imple-

IN BRIEF

• Deltron Electronics will come to the stock market in the autumn via a placing that will value the company at £30m-£35m. Deltron is a supplier of electronic components with operations in the UK and France. It makes and distributes a range of electro-mechanical and passive components, including switches, filters and connectors. Since a management buy-in at Deltron in 1991, turnover has risen from £4.7m in the year to September 1992 to almost £20m in the first nine months of the current year. Operating profit has increased from £14,000 to more than £1.9m in the latest nine months.

• The Television Corporation, formed by the merger of Sunset & Vine and Molinare, made pre-tax profits of £1.05m in the half-year to June. TVC said results had met targets and that recent contract wins would keep developments "well on track". These include 260 Channel 5 programmes for transmission in 1997.

• AMBC, the engineering, construction and development group, is selling its 50 per cent stake in Building and Property Management Services, a company originally formed to acquire two divisions of the government's Property Services Agency. BPMS is valued by the sale, to a venture capital-backed bidder, at £34.6m. In the year to September 1995, BPMS made profit before tax of £15.5m on sales of £364.6m.

• Astec (BSR) announced profits up from £9.92m to £13.1m in the six months to June and said it expected its performance to continue to improve in the second half. Market growth would be lower, the company said, but it remained committed to keeping costs under control. Earnings per share advanced from 2.6p to 3.32p, out of which Astec is paying an interim dividend raised 26 per cent to 0.63p.

• Kalamazoo told investors at its annual meeting yesterday that its recent acquisition of European Automotive Dealer Systems had been well integrated, making it Europe's largest supplier of dealer management systems with annual revenue of more than £50m. Bob Jordan, chairman, said: "We now look forward to the planned contribution to earnings in the second half of this year."

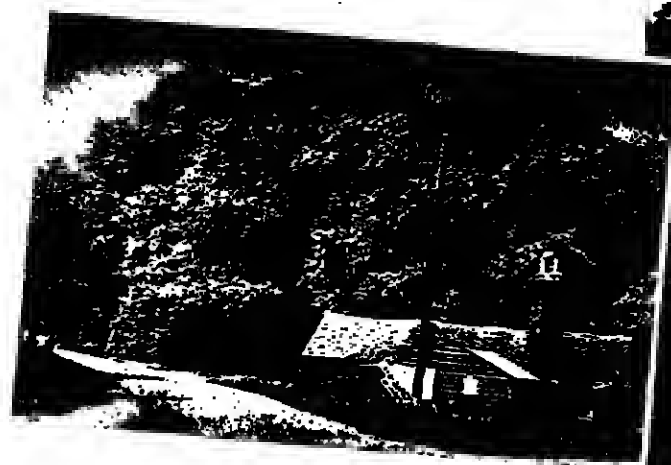
• Roche Holding, the Swiss pharmaceutical group, saw net profit jump from Sfr1.91bn to Sfr2.21bn in the six months to June and said it expected a further increase in the full year. The figures came in at the bottom end of analysts' expectations. Roche said first-half operating profits were hit by a reduction in reference prices in Japan, lower prices in Italy, and price cuts at both its fragrances unit and in its US laboratory business.

• Cairn Energy announced that Enterprise Oil Exploration, operator for a group including Cairn Energy, had successfully conducted production tests on well 17-VI-1X in Block 17, offshore Vietnam. The company said the well tested a 400 metre basement section, yielding a flow rate of up to 750 barrels of oil per day. The well has been plugged and abandoned.

• Amey has won a five-year contract worth £21m by the Ministry of Defence to manage support services for HMS Nelson in Portsmouth. The contract includes the management and delivery of accommodation services, catering support, cleaning, work services, mail services, and transport and driver training.

news

How the peaceful country lanes of old England have been placed on the certain road to destruction



As many as 5,000 country byways are being ruined by heavy traffic, according to a new report

MICHAEL STREETER

Winding, tranquil, edged with a profusion of wild flowers, its charm was so powerful that although it was only a route between two points, it became a symbol of national identity. 'There'll always be an England,' sang Anne Shelton, 'while there's a country lane ...'

Think of it and the images proliferate: birdsong and bees buzzing in the hedges, the smell of creamy-white meadow-sweet, and, perhaps once an hour or so, a single car – or, more likely, an old van – chugging past. It isn't like that any more, the Council for the Protection of Rural England reports today, giving a doleful picture of the country lane in the 1990s. The birdsong is drowned out by traffic noise, the wild-flower scents are drowned by exhaust fumes, and that occasional passing vehicle is now a flood of lorries and commuter cars using the lane as a "rat-run".

The huge growth in commuting from the countryside to towns and cities is destroying the character of up to 5,000 country lanes, the CPRE claims. Its report, *Lost Lanes*, presents a bleak "snapshot" of 50 rural routes around the country, which, it believes, are being "ruined" by traffic. It says people have been discouraged from cycling, walking and horse-riding and the roads themselves have been damaged by the increased volume of cars and lorries.

"Overall, throughout the

country we think as many as 4,000-5,000 lanes are affected," said Lilli Matson, the CPRE's transport campaigner. "A separate survey in Nottinghamshire alone showed more than 100 lanes involved."

The report, the result of research by volunteers in their own areas, follows the CPRE's *Traffic Trauma Map*, published two weeks ago, which claimed that rural traffic could double or even treble over the next 30 years – raising the prospect of more lanes vanishing.

The authors of this latest study say the exodus of urban dwellers to the countryside – at a rate of 300 people a day over 20 years – is one of main reasons for the crumbling of our ancient country roads. The use of these routes as short-cuts by lorry drivers is also signalled by the report as a major problem. "Tourism only accounts for about a quarter of the traffic; more fundamentally, everybody is driving more," said Ms Matson. "There has been a huge growth in the average length of journeys."

Lost Lanes details the ways traffic destroys rural tranquillity. These include noise, road lighting, the destruction of roads and the loss of the lanes as social amenities, where people can enjoy "walking, cycling and horse-riding".

In the 50 examples around the country, some lanes suffer more than 5,000 vehicles a day, a level characterised by the report as causing "loss of rural



Paradise lost? Cranbrook Road, in Kent, c1930 and today. Traffic has drowned the sound of birdsong and the scent of wild flowers. Photographs: Cranbrook Museum/Tony Buckingham

character". Between 2,000 and 5,000 vehicles a day is described as "not pleasant to cycle or ride".

Ms Matson said the Department of Transport and some highways authorities did not think there was a significant problem – but they were missing the point, she said.

"The numbers may look quite low compared with towns, but it does not take much traffic on a country lane to alter completely its whole character."

She said where local authorities did act it was usually by imposing "suburban" solutions, such as street lighting, and removing bends and hedgerows which often destroyed the character of areas.

The CPRE is also worried that government plans for new homes in the countryside could exacerbate the problem if locations are chosen which can only be reached by cars.

The organisation wants to see

more government money spent on solutions, lower speed limits on rural roads and building new homes in urban areas where there is public transport.

Counties in the current study are: Avon, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Norfolk, North Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Surrey and Wiltshire.

The report also includes comments from local residents bemoaning the loss of their rural lanes. One came from a householder in Tattenhall, near Chester, who complained about the volume of traffic on Burwardsley Road.

"When I was a child, school holidays were always spent roaming country lanes on our bikes. We never see children along our lanes unaccompanied, either walking or on cycles ... frankly I can't wait to sell up and go!"

From rural idyll to local 'rat run'

It was once a sleepy country lane, which wound gently through hop fields and cider orchards on the edge of the Kent Weald.

The picturesque Cranbrook Road evoked Enid Blyton tales of children on adventures, or images of the television series *The Darling Buds of May*, which was filmed in nearby Fiacley.

Today the hop fields are gone and so too the tranquillity. This seven-mile road which links Tenterden to Cranbrook has become what locals call a "rat run"; a valued short cut for

commuters and lorry drivers, but a place of growing danger for cyclists and walkers.

Frank Spain, a retired farmer who has lived all his 83 years in the area, blames the changing character of the lane firmly on the traffic.

"The traffic now is three times worse than it was 20 years ago," he said. "All the roads around here are losing their character."

The road is one of 50 featured in the CPRE report, which records its average daily traffic level (ADT) as 4,168 vehicles,

including 168 lorries. The CPRE forecasts a peak of 11,379 vehicles by the year 2025, at current rates.

The report states: "It is considered by locals to be extremely dangerous to walk and ride down the lane because of its narrowness – cars pass at speed with inches."

Local CPRE worker Catherine Eady has lived for years in a 17th-century farmhouse on the lane, and says she has given up riding her horse there. "I have the stable and a field but no where to ride the horse so I

have to keep it elsewhere. I tried cycling but that was even worse. There are hardly any verges – there's nowhere to escape when a vehicle comes."

The road has a bad record for accidents as motorists travel at up to 60mph around the narrow route; and now locals fear the problem could get worse.

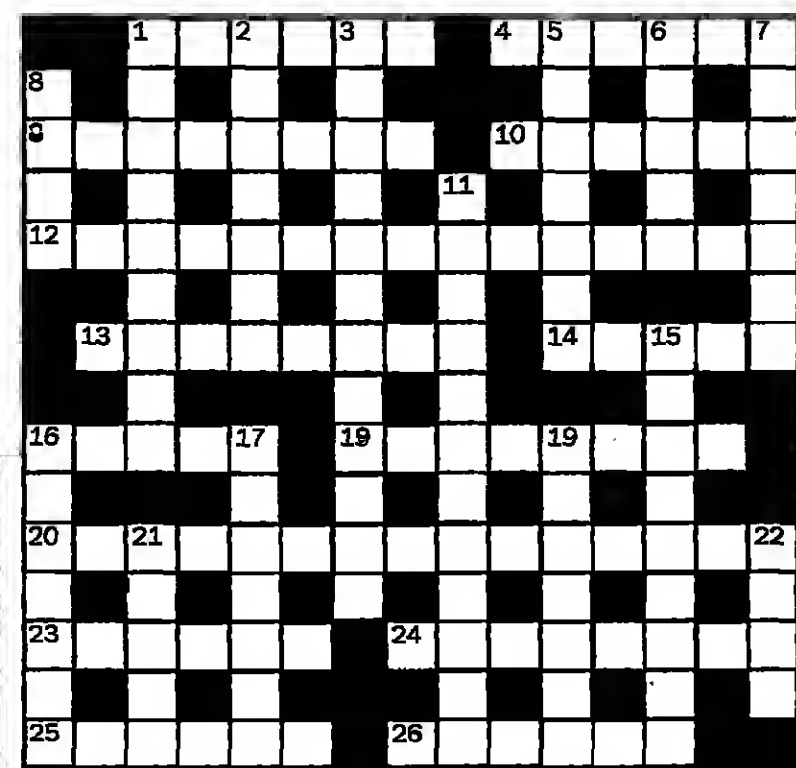
"They are planning to build a Tesco store in Tenterden which will be aiming to attract customers in from surrounding villages," said Catherine Eady. "This road will be a natural route for many of them."

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3077. Wednesday 28 August

By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



- ACROSS**
- Secluded spot in a large bay (6)
 - Big cat Leo, running wild in revolutionary time (6)
 - Coarse language about bridal trains? (8)
 - Put nothing on insect wound – just take strong ale (6)
 - Coward's lifestyle? (6,3,6)
 - Vice Alan broke up in Port of Spain, we hear (8)
 - Drops tips (5)
 - But it was not Harris's river! (5)
 - Time-out's ordered for acrobatic flier (8)
 - If this harbour light fails, fly batteries out with switch (6,2,7)
 - Spot politician in the house? (6)

- DOWN**
- Lawyer engaged in the lists, non-U, possibly (8)
 - Instruction to player to hold on – most of side out, injured (6)
 - A-team's incidental remarks (6)
 - Lying in wait, a doctor caused trouble (9)
 - Record once broken around river (7)
 - Proof of fine Victoria paid out (12)
 - Does it moult in the mews? (7)
 - Breather one takes in a loincloth (9)
 - Depressions in gutters (7)
 - Dry run in promotion (4)
 - They prevented chest trouble in the war (12)

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- Fast runs on motorway give false impressions (9)
- Chuck, on grass, is an incompetent foolish fellow (7)
- Jacket once folded in two, on top of trousers (7)
- Reddish-brown neat line (7)
- They promote pawns, for example, under notice (5)
- Toy on hand for dope in America (2-2)



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